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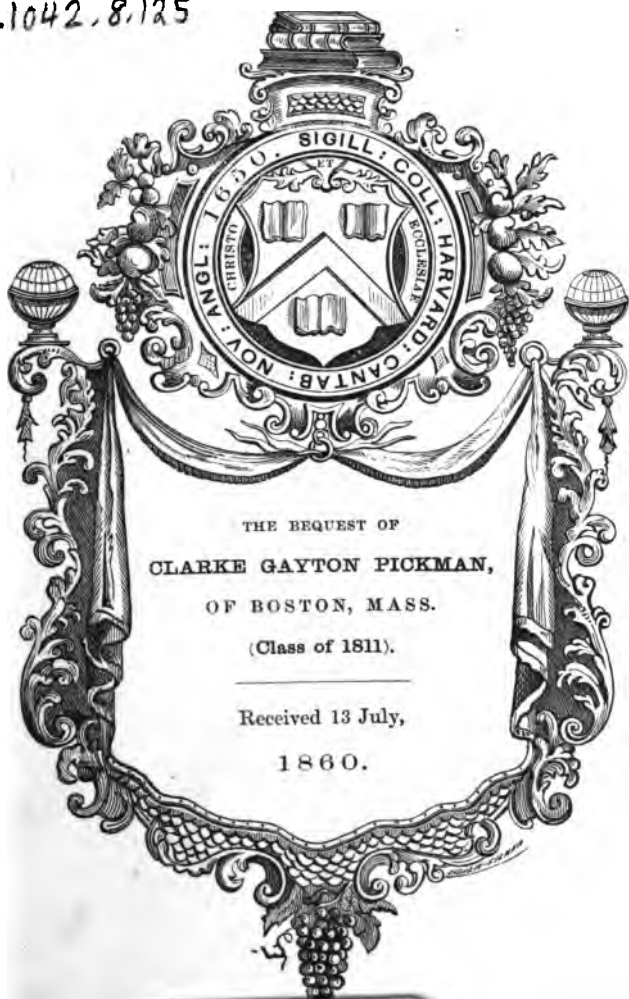
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THE BEQUEST OF
CLARKE GAYTON PICKMAN,
OF BOSTON, MASS.

(Class of 1811).

Received 13 July,
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THE

HILLSIDE CHURCH:

in Bolton, Mass.

OR

REMINISCENCES

OF A

COUNTRY PASTORATE.

BY

JOHN W. CHICKERING, D.D.,

PASTOR OF HIGH ST. CHURCH, PORTLAND, MAINE.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE PEOPLE OF MY
CITY PASTORATE,
AND THE SCATTERED SURVIVORS OF MY
COUNTRY PASTORATE,

These Reminiscences are most affectionately inscribed; with the hope and prayer, that we may be gathered into one fold, in that world where the chief Shepherd shall lead all His flock, through even more delightful paths than those, along which, whether in the country or in the city, He has kindly led their grateful and loving

PASTOR.

COTTAGE MANSE, November, 1855.

INTRODUCTION.

The former pastor of the rural Charge, which for brevity's sake will be not inappropriately designated on these pages as the Hillside church, would not become even in these brief sketches, its historian, were there not other and higher motives impelling to such a work, than those which are of a personal nature.

The interest which gathers, to our view, around organizations, as around persons, no longer numbered among the living and the active on earth, would not now suffice to call forth or to justify such an effort, amidst the demands for other labor.

The cares of an extensive city pastorate, growing no less weighty, now that a score of years has been passed amidst their pressure, leave as little leisure as ambition, for authorship.

Personally, this work is undertaken with reluctance ; though a melancholy pleasure attends the effort to perpetuate the memory, and prolong the influential existence,

of a church, which many love to regard as not dead nor even sleeping.

But there are higher motives, which press more and more strongly in such a direction, upon the conscience of a Christian pastor, after twenty-five years of experience and observation.

The lessons taught him by God's providence and grace, he has no right to consider as belonging exclusively to himself and those to whom he personally ministers.

Whatever usefulness the Master has graciously accorded to the productions of his own or of other and abler pens, in the transmission of thoughts and facts to wide circles of readers, must assume the force of a command as to the use of other similar materials. He may well feel, that a necessity is laid upon him, to preach the Gospel in this as well as in other ways; variously illustrating, as well as clearly stating, its gracious provisions; and *that* through the press as well as from the pulpit.

Indeed, the turning weight in the scale, respecting the publication of these reminiscences, was the request of a lay brother in the interior, previously a stranger to the writer, who felt so deep an interest in one series of "Pastor's Sketches," that he wished other ministers to bring forward their scantier materials, for the edification of the church; their more slender stores of fact and thought, to feed the flock of God; that flock which lives by the bread,

not only of His word, but of His providential and gracious dealings, witnessed or recorded.

After the sad and glorious changes of a quarter of a century, changes which have transferred so many believers from earthly homes, darkened by their departure, to celestial habitations which no shadows can invade, there are many yet living, to whom these fragmentary sketches will be peculiarly suggestive.

They remember, either as actors or as interested spectators, the early history of that little band, with a name as long, almost, as their first catalogue; known, far and near, as "the Evangelical Congregational Church and Society of Boston, London, S and S." *Boston, London, S. and S.*

It may do them good, whether they were then friends or foes to that singularly bold and startling enterprise, to be reminded of its inception and early history; and to be informed of some of its circumstances and results, which will perhaps be new to them.

Were the object in writing, the mere amusement of the general reader, or on the other hand, the gratification of a select few, by recalling the charms of an almost princely hospitality, and describing the social amenities which surrounded alike the stated pastor and the occasional visitors, within the bounds of that secluded parish, a very different book might be made; more entertaining, if less fitted to be useful.

It was, indeed, a rare position for a young pastor to be

placed in, fresh from halls of learning ; introducing him at once to some of the loveliest scenery in New England, and to such varied and refined society, as few pastors, even in the cities, have opportunity and leisure to enjoy.

It was the hospitable custom for one mansion within the bounds of that extended parish, to be ever open to guests, from far and near. At one time to Lafayette with "troops of retainers, keeping watch and ward" outside, passing the night amidst almost baronial hospitality, with his old friend, formerly known as the American Merchant in Paris ; at another time to some humble pastor or other wayfarer, to whom a night's or a week's entertainment was a pecuniary as well as a social favor, even if he did not, like Joseph's brethren, find more substantial proofs of liberality—not being, in any sense, sent empty away.

Meeting, some months since, in the city of W——, a most excellent and venerable minister of another denomination, I was much affected with the earnest gratitude expressed in his manner of referring to a pecuniary gift, once pressed upon him as compensation for a familiar parlor service which he had conducted at the Hillside.

It was accompanied by the just and significant quotation, in that case used rather as an apology for a gift : "The laborer is worthy of his hire."

The visits of the wise and good, of this and other lands, were not like angel's visits, few and far between, at the

"cottage," the "manse," and in the pulpit. Few pastors and their flocks are favored with such varied and excellent supplies of occasional service.

Many foreign Christian travellers, both clerical and lay, found their way by the old stage route, to a place so well known, and to the enjoyment of a hospitality which on a still more extended scale had been witnessed, under the same auspices, in the *salons* of the fine old palatial mansion No. 18, *Rue de P—— C—— Paris*.

Many a pleasant and profitable acquaintance with gentlemen and ladies of our own land, grew up in this way, which the then youthful pastor has never ceased to cultivate and give thanks for. Among others, that noble specimen of a Christian pastor and gentleman, Rev. Dr. M. of St. ——— Episcopal church, New York, must be mentioned, now that his acquaintance can no longer be enjoyed on earth, except through the medium of retrospection, and the perusal of his memoir, prepared by a kindred spirit, Rev. Dr. S——, now of B., Massachusetts.

His return, with a family party, from Saratoga, after an excursion of great interest, both in itself and its occasion, will not soon be forgotten ; nor his ready consent to occupy the Hillside pulpit on the following Sabbath ; which he did to universal acceptance, closing the day with a third and more familiar service in a distant neighborhood.

While such recollections gather about scenes so touch-

ing to the hearts of all who actively mingled in them, other thoughts are awakened in the minds of the younger generation, to whom the Hillside church, and the persons and things connected with its early history, appear surrounded with the glowing atmosphere of life's morning.

Dr. H. is the warm-hearted son of one of our loveliest brethren in the original membership, now with his companion and daughter a member of the general assembly in Heaven. He thus writes, in the course of other and more personal reminiscences :

" You know my own family are all gone ; and you can judge how much I miss those with whom I have always held sweet counsel."

" And can you recall to mind any men or women, on whom in youth you looked, with reverent and almost adoring eyes, and from whom you were then separated until you arrived at manhood ? and have you thought of them in the interim, with almost filial affection, and then met them, with your heart refreshed or saddened by the reunion ? "

" I well recollect where we had our pew in the B—— church. The Sabbath School room, the pulpit, the organ, are all in my mind. Old Mr. P—— and his wife are not at all forgotten, nor my teacher, Mr. M——."

" No royal residence or equipage has ever so impressed me as did the mansion, carriages, and horses of Mr. ——. No *Jardin des Plantes*, *Jardin des Tuileries*, or grounds

at Versailles or Fontainebleau, have ever given me more pleasure than my rambles in that grove near the church."

* * * "In my dreams of my own dear departed parents and sister, I never find them disconnected with that church in B——."

But while, in such hearts, many deep fountains will be opened, both of sweet and of bitter memories, which may, by the divine blessing, send forth pure and life-giving streams, there are lessons here, of God's own furnishing, adapted to all classes of readers. May He compensate for the imperfect manner of their transmission, by the gift of the instructing and sanctifying Spirit.

Thus the unsparing liberality and fervent prayers of the projector of that enterprise, and his few associates in its inception and accomplishment, will be still crowned with fruits unto holiness, whose end is everlasting life, when they shall have joined the generation now nearly passed away, in that world where is no Temple but the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.

It only remains to be added, that the truth, and nothing but the truth, if not, in all cases, from motives of delicacy, the whole truth, is to be found on the following pages. This is not a romance, even of history; but a veritable statement of occurrences, and as nearly as can be recollected, of conversations.

Truth is indeed, sometimes, stranger than fiction; and the recollection of scenes, both of tender interest and of

bitter opposition, here but partially set forth, often appears to us who were actors or sufferers in them, rather like dreams, than like remembrances.

As History has been defined, Philosophy teaching by examples, so these historical fragments may prove instructive exemplifications of some great principles in God's gracious and providential government.

Let him that readeth understand. May the writing and the reading, promote the Cause, and aid many souls in coming to the knowledge and love, of that Divine Redeemer who loved us and gave Himself to die for us ; for whose honor and by whose signal blessing, the church on the Hillside was established.

BUILDING THE OLD WASTES.

LET us first go back, beyond the beginning of the Country Pastorate, and see how, with the divine blessing, the desolations of many generations were in part repaired, and an evangelical ministry established within reach of a large community, among whom other influences had long held undisputed sway.

In its natural aspect, it was a garden, rather than a waste, in the midst of which Mr. ^{Milner} W——, about a quarter of a century ago, erected, mostly at his own expense, a house “for the worship of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

It was designed for the accommodation of any, in four adjacent towns, who were agreed

in that ancient and scriptural formula of faith; a formula adopted as the distinctive wording of the first invitation sent out through a village newspaper, for a meeting of consultation.

It was noticed afterward, as a special favor of providence towards the undertaking, that while the first number of the above mentioned newspaper contained the first notice of that meeting, the last number announced the public services at the ordination of the pastor. Without such a medium of communication, great difficulty would have been found in making known to the public the several steps in the progress of the enterprise. The L—— Gazette lived just long enough to do this work, kindly and thoroughly.

Only twelve attended that preliminary meeting. "Just the number of the apostles," said the projector, whose habits of scriptural association and allusion suggested many original thoughts and not a few good devices. Among the latter may be men-

tioned the "Nicodemus seats," which, when the house was built, were placed in the passage leading to the lecture room. They were occupied at different times, by more than one, who, like him of old, came by night and privately, for fear of reproach or more serious consequences, to sit behind a low screen partition, and hear the gospel.

It may be proper to advert more distinctly to the circumstances attending the first conception of a plan, so offensive to some, and so hopeless of accomplishment in the view of others, as the gathering an evangelical church on that spot. It was far from any village; and nearly all the population within a radius of six miles were supplied to their satisfaction, so far as could be known, with at least the opportunity, of attending ministrations of a very different character.

The gentleman to whom reference must be made, in these pages, more often, doubtless, than he would choose if it could be well avoided, had returned from a foreign land to

the neighborhood of his nativity, with deep convictions of religious truth and duty; convictions which were very imperfectly met by what he heard on the sabbath, in the house of God.

Those convictions he was neither afraid nor ashamed to express. He felt deeply and spoke strongly; and awakened in consequence, a measure of disapprobation in the minds of many, who had once delighted to honor him as a prosperous son of their ancient and beautiful town, and a munificent contributor to the adorning of their newly erected house of worship.

Was he then their enemy because he told them the truth? Or because he made great sacrifices, both of property and of feeling, to *spread* the truth, according to his conscientious and deep seated convictions?

Those who had the best opportunity for knowing, judged otherwise.

It should be mentioned in this connexion, that he had been in the habit of going, fre-

quently, on the Sabbath, to the neighboring town of B., where the gospel was preached with some degree of clearness; but he was led to feel the impropriety of enjoying such privileges for himself and a part of his family, while others were left at home without public worship, or were compelled to hear discourses on religion which he believed to be erroneous, or at the best, deficient in the great elements of evangelical truth.

This feeling was strengthened, and the purpose of making some change confirmed, by a question one day proposed by a young daughter, just beginning to feel the need of piety, and to perceive the difference between the views and spirit expressed in various sermons. She inquired: "Papa, which shall I believe? What I hear at B.? Or what I hear at L.?"

It was in part at least, to some of those young lambs of the hillside flock, that Dr. Waterbury's excellent "Advice to Young Christians" was originally in substance ad-

dressed. To them, as well as to thousands of others, it is believed, those wise and affectionate counsels have proved useful; fitting them for those important positions of domestic or other influence, in which, after a quarter of a century, those of them who are still on earth find themselves placed.

But perhaps the most directly impelling motive to immediate "church erection" on the part of Mr. W., remains to be mentioned.

Among the hospitable customs at the cottage, as the spacious and elegant mansion at the hillside was familiarly called, was the weekly entertainment, at dinner, of some of the neighboring ministers.

On one such occasion, a distinct inquiry addressed to Rev. Mr. —, as to the views he entertained concerning the character and work of Christ, brought out, for substance, the following answer: that He was a derived being, of pure and exalted character, by whose example and teachings we might be

enabled, through virtuous living, to merit the favor of God, and happiness hereafter in His presence.

This was too much, both for the conscience and the heart of Mr. W., who had learned to rest all his hopes on the atoning sacrifice of a divine Redeemer, who became a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.

He determined to delay no longer than should be absolutely necessary, the commencement of a movement in the direction of an evangelical ministry for that neighborhood.

His last attendance at the church in L., occurred on a communion Sabbath. He felt it an imperative though painful duty, to retire, with his family, before the celebration of that ordinance, the very essence of which, as the supper of the Cross, had evaporated from those ministrations in the process of theological change, since his fathers had worshipped near the same spot.

This proceeding was noticed, with various

emotions, by different classes of observers; and among others by a pious man of the Baptist persuasion, who had long sighed for the spiritual privileges which his soul loved.

He soon called on Mr. W., and alluded to his course on the preceding Sabbath. They had a full and free conference respecting what had long lain near both their hearts: the honor of their divine Saviour, and the duty of providing for themselves and others the pure ordinances of his gospel.

Mr. B. remarked in the course of conversation, that he greatly desired to see a new house of worship built, and a church gathered.

"How much," asked Mr. W., "do you desire it?"

"Very much indeed," was his reply.

"Yes, but I am a pounds, shillings, and pence man, and I would still ask *how much* you desire it?"

"Ah, sir, I understand you; but I am a poor man, and can do but little."

"Well, I will make a proposition: you may put down on this paper as many hundreds of dollars as you think proper; and I will put down as many thousands."

"*Will you?*" exclaimed Mr. B., rising and walking the room in great agitation.

"Yes; and in addition, I will give you your choice of four or six acres, out of my six or seven hundred, as a site, anywhere except in front of my house."

Mr. B. now subscribed three hundred; and had the pleasure of seeing eleven times that sum immediately on paper.

The interview ended with a walk into a beautiful grove on Mr. W.'s extensive domain for the purpose of making the proposed selection of a site for the new sanctuary. He led the way into the forest, and we may imagine his emotions on finding the place selected to be the very one on which, with a friend, he had long before kneeled in prayer, imploring that the way might be opened for such a structure to be reared, upon that very spot.

So vivid were the impressions of that night scene, (for, to avoid observation, the place had been visited by moonlight,) that some of the very words of that first prayer on the spot whence so many public devotions afterwards ascended, have been preserved. They were as follows:—"Oh, thou great Jehovah! Thou Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Thou God over all, blessed forever, director and controller of all events. If it be for thine honor and glory; if it be for the advancement of the glorious cause of the divine and crucified Redeemer in this world, grant that a house may be here erected which shall prove none other than the house of God, the very gate of heaven, to thousands of immortal souls, who through the blood and righteousness, the great atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, may hereafter be permitted to worship in that celestial temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Thenceforth neither Mr. W. nor the Chris-

tian brother who chose the same location, felt any necessity for a pillar of cloud to direct their way in that particular. The place for the altar was already provided.

The pecuniary aid received from those who responded to the first published invitation was merely nominal; and yet their zealous and prayerful coöperation was felt to be highly important. To their hundreds contributed, thousands were successively added, mostly from one family; all the members of which, down to the infant in the cradle, took their turns in furnishing money, or some important fixture, as a bell, a clock, or a carpet.

On one occasion, the means subscribed having been exhausted, and some extra demand occurring, Mr. W. remarked to the superintendent of the work, that all his family had done their part except the only son, then an infant of days; and he proposed to ask him. This was done; and on the principle that silence gives consent, his lawful guar-

dian presented an additional sum of five hundred or a thousand dollars in the child's name, saying that he might as well begin thus early the work of beneficence, which it was hoped he would live to practice more extensively. Vain hope; yet he is not lost, but gone before.

When completed, this was one of the most tasteful and commodious church edifices in New England. A lofty and neatly furnished suite of rooms, three in number, occupied the basement. Two of these were fitted up as reading rooms, and kept supplied with religious publications, designed for those of either sex, who might wish to remain during the intermission.

Extensive ranges of "cupboards" were also provided, numbered like the pews above, and furnished with locks and keys, for the accommodation of the distant comers, who might wish to keep a supply of refreshments ready; an arrangement which furnished material for some very harmless witticisms

among those who were not over friendly to the undertaking, as to the alleged offering of inducements to worshippers, in the form of well spread tea-tables.

Nothing, however, was ever provided on the Sabbath, on the premises, more substantial than "the feast of reason and the flow of soul;" for which, Christian books, fellowship, and ordinances furnished ample materials. An organ, furnaces, and every convenience and elegance then in use, completed the interior arrangements; while a costly outside clock, striking the hours upon a bell of nearly two thousand pounds' weight, proclaimed to the startled traveller on the lonely hillside, and when the wind was fair, to the dwellers in the distant villages, that a new sanctuary had risen, as if by magic in a night, on B. Hill.

Beautiful for situation was that octagonal structure, with all its surroundings. It stood on the edge of a large and well-trimmed park, with its paths and arbors; and com-

manded a view of distant mountains, with a charming valley in the foreground. Along those plains, and on the ridges and slopes which varied the monotonous level of the river intervalles, a dozen spires shone in the morning sun, and as many pleasant villages nestled, white and peaceful, under ancient elms and sycamores.

In the autumn, nature's coat of many colors invested the scene with new splendor. Even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like those meadows and mountains. The walnut, oak, elm, maple, and other deciduous trees, in their variegated drapery, relieved against the dark evergreen which skirted the higher elevations, presented a charming specimen of a native American landscape, difficult to be reproduced or rivalled in other climes.

Sometimes the winding rivers overflowed their banks; and the valleys became long narrow lakes, with trees standing out of the water and in the water. In the autumn, not

unfrequently, mists filled the valleys, higher up than the spring floods. To a spectator standing on the hill-side, near the church, the ridges then appeared like islands in a vast sheet of water; while some of the loftiest trees, lifting their budding branches above the level of the vapor, suggested the idea of a rising deluge that might submerge the hills and the distant mountains.

But with all this external beauty, and many marks of thrift among the people, as well as much intelligence and kindness, the region was to a great extent one of spiritual desolation. There had been no reaction there, nor resurrection, from the dead formality and the frigid indifference, which at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, enveloped, like a winding sheet, so many of the Massachusetts churches; mostly churches of the pilgrims, or of their not very remote descendants.

Tradition reports that Whitfield, who in cold New England, as well as in the sunny

South, and in the Fatherland, found crowds ready to be warmed into a new glow of feeling by his breathing thoughts and burning words, found no response in that chilly neighborhood; but shook off the dust from his feet, as he passed quickly away, leaving it in the power of a professed shepherd of one of those flocks whose "hungry sheep looked up and were not fed," in a succeeding generation to make the true, terrible boast, that none of those religious phrensies called revivals, had ever disturbed that "highly favored congregation."

Only seven families were known, in one of those towns, to call upon God around a family altar. Seven farms were counted, during a Sabbath ride of seven miles to a third service, on which, in fine weather, the work of getting in hay was going on; and as to discipline, so much had it fallen into discredit and contempt, that when a flagrant case of intemperance, in one of those churches, could no longer be neglected, the culprit anticipated ecclesiastical action, by rising in

the gallery before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and publicly excommunicating the church itself.

A shrewd and sometimes blunt man, a father in the new church, and formerly in the congregational ministry, well expressed his view of the nature of that placid lethargy which no religious excitement had before disturbed, in one of those "happy valleys" where revivals had never been known.

Hearing, in a mixed company, some severe remarks upon the supposed authors of the new movement, the excitement consequent upon which had, it was alleged, disturbed the repose of the most quiet community to be found in the land, the venerable old man, not unlike the celebrated Rowland Hill, either in mind or in person, promptly replied: "This is indeed a very quiet place, but I know of one that is more so."

"Where is that?" asked the first speaker.

"*In the GRAVEYARD yonder!*" replied father P., suiting the action to the word.

It was indeed "an ower true tale for jesting." The spiritual slumber into which entire communities had settled down for generations, including so-called churches of Christ, very closely resembled death, or at least suspended animation.

If this should seem to any more earnest men, of the present generation in that region, an exaggerated statement, it must be, that they do not remember, or that they never knew, the religious aspect of those communities at that time, as presented to the view, even of men of the world, who had some impressions as to what churches of Christ ought to be. Professed worldliness found no occasion to oppose such professed Christianity; but it did not hesitate to express contempt for it.

It was not so much the preaching or believing of positive error, as the withholding and ignoring of great gospel truths, which had produced the sad lack of vital piety, and the open disregard of practical religious du-

ties, among a people possessed of much refinement and exhibiting many social virtues.

It was intended as a compliment to one aged incumbent of the pastoral office in that neighborhood, when in the sermon at his funeral, the preacher said, in substance, that as to views of doctrine, the life and labors of the departed furnished little material for remark, since he had been rather a practical than a doctrinal preacher, and there were probably few of his hearers who after a ministry of some forty years, "*knew what his theological tenets were!*"

No doubt there were vestiges of the ancient faith of the apostles and the puritans in many a household, where the excellent books and the traditionary counsels, handed down as precious heirlooms from bygone generations, had preserved some embers of gospel truth smouldering under the ashes of a negative Christianity; ready to glow, we trust, in the fresh air of the celestial world. Indeed some aged persons, connected with

those churches, clinging to Christ as a divine, atoning Saviour, were utterly incredulous as to the existence of any different opinions or teachings among the modern ministry; especially affirming that *their* minister *must* believe in the good old doctrines, because he often quoted the good old texts.

But I would not dwell upon those times. They have in a great measure passed away. Rival errors, as well as the renewed presentation of forgotten truths, have disturbed the prolonged and deathlike "quiet" of those respectable communities. True liberality, both among preachers and people, has it is hoped taken the place of the bitterness and even persecution which in too many cases disgraced the name, when the ancient faith was introduced, and it was felt and said, "They that have turned the world upside down have come hither also;" and when fire from heaven was so fervently if not devoutly invoked to come down and destroy the new edifice, as to suggest a doubt,

whether even on the remote hillside, it would have escaped destruction, had not the loss been likely to fall upon underwriters.

Indeed, such was the force of prejudice; and so real and weighty was the "cross" which had to be borne, even as to property and business, by some of those who joined the new society, that the location of the house, somewhat out of the reach of that espionage which would have marked every man entering its doors, if it had been placed in either of the villages, was supposed, though not intended, to be highly favorable to the gathering of a congregation. A few visits to the hillside made some persons quite indifferent as to what others might say or do.

The new, unique, and beautiful house was finished and dedicated; each step, as the breaking ground, laying the corner stone, and dedication, having been "sanctified by the word of God and prayer," and conducted upon a liberal scale of courtesy and hospi-

talities, in the invitation and entertainment of ministers and others from far and near. The "fatted calf" was never wanting, and a kind welcome was always ready on such occasions.

The thoughtful projector of the enterprise anticipated what would have otherwise been a pressing deficiency, by having a singing school opened before hand at his own expense. The necessary books were also provided, and other arrangements made, for the simultaneous opening of a Sabbath School, that indispensable accompaniment and nursery for the church.

So this child of faith, and prayer, and generosity sprung at once into an existence rather mature than infantile. The services of able preachers were secured for single Sabbaths or longer periods. Among these may be mentioned the name of the elder Beecher, already venerable in years and wisdom, and clothed with the eloquence of truth and feeling, as with a garment; and

the youthful Christmas, early taken from the churches, of which, first in Montreal, and then in New York, he promised and had begun to be a bright and shining light, in which many already rejoiced.

His gentle, persuasive, though at times bold and overpowering eloquence, thrilled many a heart, and by God's blessing, it is hoped, saved many a soul in those first assemblies on B. Hill.

Public attention was aroused. Some "who came to scoff, remained to pray," and returned to assume new relations to the infant congregation. God crowned the undertaking with His gracious as well as His providential blessing. The Spirit was not withheld; and when the "Country Pastorate" commenced, a church of thirty-six members, of whom half were males, had just been organized.

Almost its first act, in its ecclesiastical capacity, was the observance of a day of fasting and prayer with reference to the

commencement of the ministry of reconciliation, under circumstances so peculiar, and so well fitted to impress all hearts with a sense of entire dependence upon God.

And whenever that little scattered church undertook any such duty, the attendance and interest were such as might put to the blush many a larger and more compact band of disciples.

The youthful Pastor, too youthful perhaps for any charge, found himself entrusted with the work of ministering to a small congregation, but scattered over four large townships, with no stated evangelical ministrations of any name, co-operating with his feeble efforts, among some six or eight thousand people.

But with all his cares he had many comforts. A united and affectionate church, whose members were kept closely together by pressure from without, held up his hands with prayer, and labored with him in the gospel. A Sabbath school with earnest

teachers, aided him in laying foundations with those lively stones, the hearts of the young. Indeed the congregation and the Sabbath school were nearly identical. He knew nothing of arrearages and deficiencies in the payment of salary. So that unlike many home missionaries, he could give himself wholly and without embarrassment to his work.

At the expiration of a quarter of a century he can look back with thankfulness to God, upon that early five years' ministry; while, that nothing may be lost, he endeavors to gather up some fragmentary reminiscences, not so much of what man attempted, as of what God wrought.

It may be well to say, in this connexion, that during two successive ministries, not of long duration, the church continued united and prosperous; containing many times its original number of members, and standing side by side with its sister churches in contributing to every good work; one part of

the original furniture of its Lecture Room being a row of distinctly labelled charity boxes.

But the prosperity thus graciously given, served, by multiplying its members from the different towns, to prepare the way for the more speedy growth of several branches from the parent stock. This process has gone on, until there are now some eight or ten evangelical organizations, in the four towns among which this church at first stood alone, as the representative of the faith of our fathers.

The little band of twelve, who alone were found ready to avow their attachment to the doctrines of the Reformation, have now become more than "two bands," and their number has been multiplied, it is supposed, a hundred fold.

How much of all this is to be traced directly to the commencement of the Hillside enterprise at that time, can never be known on earth. Nor is it important, since all the

glory belongs to God ; to whom let it ever be given.

As no village has grown up in that neighborhood, few people need a place of worship there, nearly all having such privileges as they desire nearer home.

The beautiful octagon is therefore solitary, though not yet in ruins. There are some yet living who "favor its stones, and take pleasure in the dust thereof."

Should its walls never again echo to the voice of a preacher, proclaiming salvation through a crucified Saviour, there are many hearts, in which the echo of such sounds, already heard there, will never cease.

Every Christian heart must agree with the declaration of its generous projector, sad but not cast down in the prospect of its being closed : "It was paid for, when the first soul was converted to Christ in it."

Should these pages fall under the eye of any, who as children or in riper years attended worship at the hillside in B——, but have

never accepted in a penitent and affectionate faith, the Saviour whose love was there proclaimed, let the writer perform his last pastoral work as to them, by once more entreating them to guard against so sad a termination of their probationary life, as would involve their remembering with remorse in ages to come, their visits to that place, which many have found the House of God and the gate of heaven.

May all the neighboring temples become such to all who visit them: and though the hillside church may lie waste, may the towns of B——, and L——, and S——, and S——, be as the garden of the Lord.

“THOU ART BESIDE THYSELF.”

It may well be supposed that the introduction of a new element among the religious influences which had long prevailed in the neighborhood of the new church, would lead to some peculiar results. Especially when the Spirit of grace, owning and vitalizing the means of grace, wrought upon minds hitherto uninstructed, and hearts hitherto unimpressed with the things of God's kingdom, it might be expected that some unusual spiritual phenomena would be developed.

Among such were the religious exercises of a man and his wife; hers, alas! of short duration on earth, whom I shall designate as Mr. and Mrs. G.

They were people of limited education and knowledge of the world, but shrewd; and, especially Mr. G., not a little imaginative and original in thought and expression.

For years previous to the erection of the B. church, they had absented themselves from all meetings, partly in consequence of what they had observed in the conduct of the boys, and the conversation of the older people, in and around the house of God on the Sabbath. How careful should we be, for ourselves and our families, to give no such occasion of reproach against professed Christians, and to furnish no such reason or excuse to those who may be tempted to say, as Mr. G. did, that it is of no use to go where what is said produces so little effect.

The practical difference between the preaching of the truth, and of error, is reduced to a hardly appreciable quantity, when such are the habits of professed worshippers.

The pulpit may send forth a right influence, but it may be, as to individual hearers,

at least, wholly nullified by what is seen or heard from the pews during service, or in the aisles and the streets afterward.

Some religious impressions were made by the Spirit of God, through the reading of his Word, upon this secluded couple, entirely shut out, as they were, from all the other means of grace. They had not even one friend with whom they could hold any spiritual conversation, as to the great things of Christ and the soul: themes which were from time to time occupying their thoughts.

Few instances ever occur, of so deep and peculiar impressions of guilt in the sight of God, as this man had, while attending no meeting, and having no knowledge of any similar feelings in any other breast.

At one time he regarded himself, though he was not an immoral man, as so much greater a sinner than others, that he prayed to God, not to make him holy, for *that* he regarded as out of the question; but to raise him up a little on the scale of character, so that he

should not be quite so far below the lowest in depravity.

When the new church was opened, they had no such knowledge of doctrinal differences, as to lead them even to try the experiment of hearing, with any view of finding sentiments and appeals more edifying, and more in accordance with their religious feelings, than the ministrations from which they had long absented themselves, as utterly jejune and powerless.

But hearing of the Sabbath School, they thought that the Bible instruction, which, on inquiring, they found was given there, might be of some use to their children. Ascertaining that the attendance of parents at public worship was not requisite, as they had supposed, to the enjoyment of that privilege, they sent their children, and, as might have been expected, soon went to see and hear for themselves. A good lesson and encouragement for all who act in the capacity of Sabbath School missionaries.

The effect produced by instructions and exhortations so entirely new and unimagined, were powerful and striking. Unaware before, that any other persons on earth had such views of sin and the Saviour, as the teachings of the Spirit had dimly revealed to their own beclouded vision, they were startled by the coincidence which, up to a certain point, they at once felt; and they eagerly received the further light, which was poured in upon them..

Too, eagerly, as it proved, for their own calmness; and too eagerly to be understood or endured by their neighbors; by whom, alas! the things of the Spirit of God, were, under any circumstances, likely to be regarded as foolishness, not being spiritually discerned.

One evening at the lecture room, before the settlement of a pastor, a familiar discourse on prayer was delivered, by Rev. Mr. P., now, we trust, in a world of praise. - This discourse greatly affected Mr. G., seeming to

him a personal appeal from the preacher, to whom he was, in fact, wholly unknown. Among other effects, it led them both to sit up through the night, indulging in a more full mutual communication of thought and feeling on religious subjects, than ever before.

This resulted in a considerable degree of excitement, which, though not amounting to mental disease, and perfectly within the influence of soothing Christian counsel, had such been at hand, was sufficient to alarm some of the neighbors, little acquainted either with Scripture or with spiritual phenomena. Others, perhaps better informed, but not more favorable to the "new religion" with which this worthy couple were becoming publicly identified, readily fell in with, and promoted the idea of their being insane.

They were soon virtually prisoners in their own house; watched in separate apartments by successive crowds of curious visitors, each questioning the half bewildered persons, giving their various counsels as to the course

to be pursued, and going away to spread exaggerated rumors of the "strange doings" at Mr. G's.

They were forcibly seized and profusely bled. Mrs. G. had a young nursing infant taken from her, and was subsequently herself taken from home in a state of high fever, induced by such treatment. Her husband, during her illness, went and begged for the privilege of seeing her. He asked if he had not always treated her kindly; and this her ignorantly cruel friends could not deny. He assured them that he knew her feelings better than they, and that his conversation would only comfort, not excite her. He promised to do anything, to suffer everything they might demand, if he might only see his wife before she died. He even offered to lie down and let her father walk over his prostrate body; so lowly and even abject had his naturally proud spirit become, under the influence of his agonizing sorrow and his strong affection, combined with that softening of the

heart under religious influences, which had already led him to forgive his enemies and release his debtors, — fresh proof, as it was thought, of his insanity.

All was in vain. The parents who with mistaken kindness could forbid the Bible to their dying child, lest it might agitate her, were not to be prevailed upon to grant a last interview with her, to the now Christian husband, whom they probably thought beside himself, as Festus thought Paul.

So she died unvisited; not prayed with; leaving no sign; though she had expressed enough to her husband and one or two intelligent Christian friends, before being torn from her child and her home, to assure them that though like her blessed Lord, she owed her death to those who knew not what they did, she would have been heard to say in His loving spirit, if reason had allowed her utterance, and the secrets of her prison house and death chamber had been disclosed: "Father, forgive them."

The report, of course, was current that "religion had killed her." It was even stated, more in detail, that the orthodox had driven her to distraction, in which state she had thrown her infant into the fire, and then taken her own life.

I will not ask, *what* "religion" it was that killed her. For I well know that many of those who were actors in that sad tragedy, as well as in other scenes of bigotry and passion, under the name of liberality, in that neighborhood, had not any clear views of the system whose name they had accepted as their own designation, nor of that which they blindly opposed. Their religion was rather negative than positive. It consisted, as was once incautiously said by an adherent of the system itself, in not believing; rather, in their case, in not knowing. The dominant religious influence there, was responsible for such sad ignorance of the Bible and of all religion, only so far as it had failed to penetrate the masses with influences, which if not evan-

gelical, might at least have proved instructive.

Such failures, perhaps, all classes of religionists are guilty of; and I would not bring a false accusation even against false doctrine, as being responsible, except negatively, for the errors and cruelties of those who knew so little of Scripture as to call a woman crazy for saying, "I am passing through the deep waters, and my feet are in the miry clay," when, as they averred, no water^e had been spilled on the floor, and the soil around was gravel; and who, having by harsh mismanagement driven an awakened couple to distraction, and one of them into the grave, charged the mischief upon "the fanatics." Doubtless all these things fell out rather for the furtherance of the gospel; and it is to be hoped that no such tragedy, of combined ignorance and bitterness, could now be enacted in those communities.

It should be added, that Mr. G., about the time when his wife was taken from him, became so impressed with the fear of being removed

by force to an insane hospital, that he rose and fled in the night with his faithful dog, to Mr. W's mansion, a long distance across fields and fences; where he greatly alarmed the family by his struggles for entrance, and where he was kindly entertained and soothed to perfect quietness; as he might have been, with his poor wife, by proper management, at any previous time.

After suitable probation, he joined the church; and though not without his eccentricities, was a faithful and valuable member.

His contributions to benevolent objects, if omitted on the Sabbath, were sure to come in, on Monday morning. After a hard day's work, he was happy to labor for his pastor by moonlight. He has been heard to say, that never since his conversion, had he eaten so much as an apple, without lifting his heart upward in thanksgiving. He is still living; in humble life, and with infirmities which keep him from the House of God; but he affords satisfactory evidence, to those who enter

into spiritual conversation with him, that though many said to him "thou art beside thyself," he is indeed, and has been for a quarter of a century, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; dwelling in a lowly cottage now, but looking for a palace in the skies.

It will be interesting to many to know, that the surviving motherless children, long since grown to maturity, have not forgotten their father's God and their mother's Saviour; whom most or all of them not only remember, but love and serve.

Doubtless that dying woman, who could neither hear the voice of God in His word, nor of man in prayer to God, lifted up her last thoughts and whispered words in prayer for the little ones she left behind.

No one could hear the full narration of those occurrences from Mr. G's own lips, without being convinced of the power and grace of God in reaching human hearts by divine influences. The emotions of that humble

couple under the calm preaching of the word, are inexplicable upon any principles of mere human psychology. In order to account for such effects, a divine Spirit must be recognized, sent by the Father of our spirits, and acting above and beyond all human causes.

Ministers and others may learn, also, the importance of great tenderness and caution in dealing with minds thus exercised. Had the woman, in this case, been soothed and taught the way to Christ, the sinner's friend, she might have lived to help in training up her family for Him. Had the man found no access to other friends, and received no different treatment, he might have been driven "beside himself," or even out of the world.

No doubt religion, like other strongly exciting subjects, has sometimes been the proximate cause of insanity, where a predisposition has existed. But such cases would be still more rare, if instead of attempts at mere diversion of the mind on the one hand, and utter neglect or cold formal instruction

on the other, the burdened spirit were gently and soothingly directed to the sinner's friend, and affectionately commended in social prayer, to him who will not break the bruised reed. How much better this course, than to say, harshly or even pityingly, "Thou art beside thyself."

THE WELL CONDUCTED FARM.

Such is the title of a temperance tract, published some years since, from the vigorous pen of the late lamented champion of the right and the true, Dr. Justin Edwards.

It was a description of the advantages of temperance principles in agriculture; and the scene was laid, not fictitiously, on that fair and fertile hillside, chequered with groves of oak and chestnut, where at a later period, the country Pastor found a home.

Those principles were steadfastly maintained on that large farm; and the quietness and success of temperance farming furnished encouragement and aid toward the establishment of a Temperance Church. Such it was in its rules, and to a good degree in its

practice ; though, as will hereinafter appear, cases of discipline now and then occurred, showing the importance of employing every possible influence, to withstand that great moral foe of households, churches, and society at large.

In these days, where the necessary if not always wisely conducted warfare against the traffic, is likely, without special care, to divert the public mind from those moral influences to which this great cause has owed, and in which it must ever find, its best success ; it may be well to look back, and see how, in one neighborhood, temperance and religion, the first a handmaid, and like John the Baptist, a forerunner, jointly promoted all things pure, lovely, and of good report.

The mischief wrought by intemperance in the churches and even in the ministry, fifty years ago, was such as happily the present generation do not know and can scarcely imagine. Even ordination occasions sometimes presented sad scenes ; scenes less amusing

than the records now and then dragged forth to our view, of accounts made out against the parishes for ardent spirits.

But though religion is no longer thus openly disgraced, and her progress obviously hindered, by strong drink, yet we should not forget the grave lesson taught in that solemn testimony of Rev. Mr. Nettleton, of much experience and wide renown,—to the effect, that he had never known the religious impressions and hopes to prove genuine, which had grown up in the heart of any person, while in the daily use of intoxicating liquors, in any quantity, however small.

The tract above referred to, was in its narrative part a veritable history, of one of the earliest experiments in New England, to test the practicability of farming on strict temperance principles.

The experiment was eminently successful. The men who, when first requested to dispense with the usual daily portion of ardent spirits, were offended, and threatened to leave

the farm, were among the first in testifying to the satisfaction and improvement resulting from the new plan.

Mr. W's offers were made in so liberal a spirit, that no workman could pretend to suspect a sordid motive; the laborers being promised nourishing food and drink at any time and in any abundance which they wished, and twelve dollars additional wages, at the close of the year.

He said he should prefer to have his farm grow up to weeds, rather than be cultivated by means of a practice so pernicious to body and soul, as that of taking ardent spirits.

Only one man at first refused to stay; and he afterwards changed his mind, but was allowed quietly to depart; a course dictated not more perhaps, by sound policy, to show the sincerity and earnestness of the movement, than by a knowledge of the man's character, and the apprehension that if suffered to remain, his influence if not his example

would be adverse to the contemplated reform.

"Timeo Danaos," was a safe motto then as now, in dealing with the lovers and vendors of those poisons. So Mr. W. found, when having bought at a high price, all the legitimate stock in trade, of a man who had intended to sell liquor at the raising of the church, but who then promised to sell nothing, he found the rogue, bribed with a dollar by other persons, busily engaged in *giving away* brandy near the spot, from which some of the more respectable opponents of the new church indignantly drove him away.

The experiment of temperance farming succeeded admirably; and was followed, the next year, by the additional stipulation, that no workman should in any way procure or use those poisons.

This stipulation was rendered necessary by the fact that then, as now, in communities where the modern and salutary principle of prohibition has not been put in operation,

many persons were ready, for the sake of a paltry gain, to give a poor laborer in return for his hard earned wages, the means of personal degradation and the stimulus to domestic abuse.

When there shall be no supply, the demand itself will for the most part cease. A consummation not yet attained, but most devoutly to be wished. We hear much of the great principle of American protection, meaning the aid given by imposts to home manufactures.

Is there to be no American protection for American citizens against the rapacious cruelty which would rob them of their last cent and their reason beside, and make them possibly — would that it were only a possibility — murderers into the bargain? Such protection is yet to be hoped for; notwithstanding the mistakes of the friends of virtue, the intrusion of bad men into their ranks, and the machinations of those who fear not God neither regard man.

All the laborers, on a farm of some six hundred acres, agreed to the proposed terms; and "were afterwards remarkably uniform in their temper and deportment; still, and peaceable. Their employer found them every day alike, and could always trust them. What he expected to have done, he found *was* done, and in the best manner. His men had never made so few mistakes, nor had so few disputes among themselves; they never injured so few tools, found so little fault with their manner of living, or were on the whole, so pleasant to one another, and to their employer."

Many thanks he received, from one and another among them, for putting them in the way of such improved health, and increased savings, and multiplied comforts in their families. To quote from the tract:

"At the close of the year, one of them came to Mr. W., and, with tears in his eyes, said, 'Sir, I thought you were very hard, in keeping us from drinking rum, I had always

been accustomed to it, and I thought that I could not do without it. And for the first three months,' said he, 'it was hard, very hard. I had such a *caving in* here,' — putting his hands up to his side — 'I had such a *desperate caving in* here, that I thought I should die. But, as you gave us good wages, and good pay, and the rest resolved to stand it without rum, I thought I would.

" 'And now,' said he, 'I am well and happy. I work with ease, sleep sweetly, and when I get up in the morning, instead of having, as I used to, my mouth and throat' — to use his own words — '*so full of cobwebs*, as to be *spitting cotton wool* all the time, my mouth and throat are clear as a whistle. I feel active, have a good appetite, and can eat anything.

" 'Formerly, when I worked hard, I was at night tired, and could not sleep. When I got up in the morning I was so sore and stiff, so filled up in my throat, and my appetite was so gone, that I could do nothing till I had

taken a glass of rum and molasses. I then stood it till breakfast. But my breakfast did not relish, and what I took did not seem to nourish me. Soon after I got to work I was *so hollow and so tired*, that I felt *desperate ugly* till 11 o'clock. Then I took a *new vamper*. And by the strength of that I got on till dinner. Then I must have a little more to give me an appetite. At three o'clock in the afternoon I must have recourse' — these were his words — '*to the hair of the same dog*, to keep up my sinking spirits. And thus I got along till night. Then I must have a little to sharpen appetite for supper. And after supper I could not sleep, till I had taken *another nightcap*.

“‘Thus I continued, year after year, undermining a constitution which was naturally robust; and growing worse and worse, until I came under your wise and excellent regulations, and now *I am cured*. I can do more labor than when I took spirits, without half the fatigue. If a man would give me the

same wages that you do, and a dollar a day in addition, to return to the practice of drinking rum, I would laugh at him.'

"Nor," continues this graphic delineator of the well conducted farm and its laborers,—
"were the benefits confined to them and their employer. Some of his *neighbors*, witnessing the complete success of his system, have themselves adopted it. When Mr. W—— went into that part of the country, many of the farmers in his neighborhood were in debt. Their farms were mortgaged, some for \$300, some for \$500, and some for \$1000, or more. They complained much of *hard times*, especially for farmers.

"Mr. W—— told them that so long as they continued to drink rum, they must expect hard times; for it was no profit, but a great expense, and in more ways than they imagined. They came to him to borrow money to save their farms from attachment. But he told them, No. It will do men who continue to drink rum no good to have money. Nay,

it will be to them an evil. The sooner their property is gone, and they have nothing with which to buy rum, the better. For then they will do less mischief than if they have money, and continue to drink rum. But, said he, if you will leave off the use of spirits, and not take a drop for three months, I will lend you money, and you may keep it by paying the interest, as long as you continue to take no ardent spirits. But when I learn that you begin to take it, I shall call for the money. Some went away in disgust. Others said, as Mr. W—— can do without rum, why cannot we? and if we can, it will be a great saving of expense. They made the experiment, and found that they could, without the least inconvenience, do without it. After a few months, they made known to Mr. W—— the result, and he helped them to as much money as they needed. They continued to do without spirits, and they had none used by men in their employment. Their business began to prosper, and their prospects to

brighten. Their debts are now paid, and their farms free from all incumbrance. The times with them have altered, and they are now thriving, respectable, and useful members of the community.

“Others, who a few years ago were in no worse a condition than they, but who continued the practice of drinking spirits, have lost their farms; lost their reputation; lost their health, and eventually their lives; and there is reason to fear, their souls. By the temperate but habitual use of spirits, they formed an *intemperate appetite*. This at first was occasionally, and then habitually indulged; and they were ruined for both worlds. The evil may extend to their children, and children’s children.

“But those who have entirely relinquished the use of spirits, until the desire for it is removed, have experienced a wonderful transformation in their feelings, their conduct, and their prospects. And the change is visible not only in them, but their families, and all

their concerns. Their windows are not broken out as before; nor their gates and garden fences falling down. The kitchen does not smoke as it used to do, because they keep it more *clean*, have drier and better wood, and lay it on the fire in a better manner. The wife does not scold as she once did, because she is well provided for, is treated kindly, and has encouragement to labor. The children are not now in rags, but are comfortably and decently clad; they are obedient, respectful, and mannerly; and appear to be growing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In short, they appear almost like a new race of beings. And if they should never again adopt the practice of taking ardent spirits, there is vastly more reason than before, to hope that they will be led by the word and spirit of God to such a course of conduct as will greatly increase their happiness and usefulness on earth, and be the means of preparing them, through grace, for the everlasting joys of heaven."

The closing words of this extract suggest another and a higher benefit of temperance, than has yet been distinctly noticed on these pages, in connection with the well conducted farm.

It is expressed as follows, in the same tract:

“The men are more serious in their deportment, spend more of their leisure time in useful reading, much oftener peruse the Scriptures, and attend public worship, and are more attentive to all the means of grace. In a word, they are more likely to become useful and happy in this life, and to be prepared for lasting blessedness in the life to come.”

This probability became, in the case of many there employed, from year to year, a happy certainty.

The connexion between temperance and religion was beautifully exemplified in the new measure of power possessed by the truth over persons not disturbed, even

slightly, in their mental operations, by the artificial stimulus of intoxicating drinks, however sparingly used.

Rough men, coming within the quiet, temperate, Sabbath keeping atmosphere of that farm, became thoughtful, restrained, and, in many cases, humble and devout.

A copy of the tract, together with the covenant and confession of faith, soon associated, in the public mind, with the owner of the farm and projector of the church, found its way to a distant town in New Hampshire, and produced a strong impression upon the mind of a young man, who was subsequently one of the workmen.

He describes the moral influence of this combined movement as very powerful and salutary, even when heard of at a distance.

Do we not need in all New England, at the present day, not only a new religious impulse, but a more close alliance between the temperance cause and those religious motives and influences, to which it has owed, and

from which it must ever expect, its brightest triumphs?

If our churches were more spiritual and active in doing good, would there not be more "well conducted" farms, manufactories, and whole communities? well conducted in the best, the highest sense.

Religion and Temperance, the one a patron, and the other a hand-maid, may together transform even the most unpromising community, East or West, into a moral and spiritual garden.

Let none put asunder what God, by the showing of his providence, has joined together.

The proprietor of that farm, on lately calling to mind the companions of his boyhood, has expressed his grateful satisfaction that for more than thirty years no workman, or neighbor, or fellow-man of his has acquired, or strengthened, through his agency, an appetite which has cast down so many strong

men, wounded, and even laid low the honor of many an ancient family.

Our churches, in this day, are generally temperance churches. That is, neither the traffic in ardent spirits, demoralizing and destructive as it is, nor their habitual use, are regarded as consistent with Christian character.

But might it not be well for a more distinctive influence to go forth from our Christian congregations against those indulgences, among others, respecting which the pen of inspiration has recorded the plain and fearful threatening, that drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? It has been suggested that parochial temperance societies should be formed, wholly distinct from local and political controversies, and simply designed to strengthen and embody a pure morality in this respect.

Let the elders set the example of self-government for the young to follow. Let the pastors and their flocks avow their prefer-

ence for the pure fountains which God, in nature, has provided, over the artificial stimulants invented by man.

Let a high and noble public sentiment, radiating from a thousand parish centres, combine in one grand moral POWER, that shall control the customs of the land.

Then, not only well conducted farms, but well conducted lives, households, communities, and nations, shall inaugurate a higher, because a purer, civilization than the world has yet known.

A MIRACLE OF DEPRAVITY AND OF MERCY.

J. M ———, was employed one summer, upon the “well conducted farm.” Odd and uncouth in his appearance, he yet exhibited a knowledge of the world, which gave him a certain consideration and influence among his fellow-workmen.

It was also soon perceived, that he was not ignorant of spiritual truth. He loved our places of social prayer; and in a blunt, sailor-like way, would tell us of his previous life, as well as of the comfort he felt in being once more “at anchor,” where he could worship with God’s people, and enjoy that quiet,

- from which a roving life had long debarred him.

He had been brought up, if not from infancy, yet in quite early life, among the Dunkers, or Tunkers, in the western part of Pennsylvania; his parents being, I think, on both sides, of Scottish extraction. His mind was early possessed by some rather crude religious notions; the combined result of natural conscience, and imperfect, if not erroneous instruction.

Having told a falsehood, and soon after being in a field at work, and seeing a thunder-cloud rising rapidly, with its loud mutterings, preliminary to its nearer crashing sound, he fled in great terror, fully believing that he saw the form, and heard the voice of God. Well would it be for all better instructed children and youth, if they more frequently remembered what that Being whom he ignorantly feared, has said in His Word, concerning liars.

The young readers of these pages are too

well instructed to be terrified in the same manner as was this ignorant youth, with the idea that they see God, or hear his reproving voice. But let them never forget that He sees and hears *them*. May they all guard their lips and their hearts against the slightest beginnings of this dreadful vice.

“ Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we venture to deceive. ’

Going further west, he fell into all the evil ways of those around him; his superstition giving place to recklessness, until, according to his own confession, he was among the vilest of the vile.

But the old saying: “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity,” is often found true in relation to extremes of human wickedness, and the riches of divine grace, as well as in the more usual signification of the phrase. J. M — found it even so.

Finding his way to New Orleans, under some false pretence of competency to pilot a

flatboat down the river, a feat, which to his own astonishment, he safely accomplished, he pursued his career of vice, in the new character of a sailor. This was then, still more than now, the high road to ruin; and there were not, as now, houses of refuge along the dangerous path.

But then, as now, *God* could make the wrath of man to praise him. A grand principle of compensation seems to pervade the spiritual, as the physical, world, according to which, the lack of visible means is often made up by special power from on high; and sailors come home from that great and wide sea, which is generally barren of religious privileges as of vegetation, rejoicing in that Saviour, of whom their friends on land have been hearing in vain.

Having by some means become part owner of a brig and her cargo, both together of no great value, but sufficient to absorb all his savings, he entered into a wager with the captain of another vessel, as to the time of

arriving at Vera Cruz, whither both were bound. He closed the agreement with the rash and profane declaration, that he would be in Vera Cruz first, or be damned, or sink the brig.

They sailed; after passing the bar, the wind blew fresh and fair. The other vessel was in sight. M., to use his own sailor phrase, "cracked on," giving all his sails and all fear to the winds. The overstrained masts bent. The rotten rigging straitened. The old hull rose and plunged with somewhat of its ancient buoyancy and grace.

But one blast of the wind, and one roll of the brig, proved too much. The rigging yielded; the masts went by the board; and in their leap and crash, they so strained the crazy hull, that the terrified crew had just time to clear and enter their boat, when the vessel made her last plunge, filled, and sunk to the bottom of the gulf.

M. was not even able to step into the cabin to secure a change of clothes. Even

the pockets of the storm-suit he had on were empty, except that they contained a small supply of the inseparable companion and bane of many sailors, and landsmen too, that filthy weed tobacco.

In scarcely a longer period than is required to write the paragraph, this wretched man found himself, and his crew, in a small boat on a rough sea, with no earthly possessions, and only a possibility of being safely taken on board the other vessel.

This was accomplished with the loss of one man, his mate and special friend; whom he left the last in the boat as he climbed upon the deck, and turning round, saw the boat swamped, and the man washed away. So greedy is the all-devouring sea.

Bitter, indeed, were his reflections, as they sailed onward to Vera Cruz. On his arrival, he went to the American Consul, and took the necessary steps for the relief of his men; and then, utterly refusing all provision for

his own wants, he wandered in almost a frenzied state down to the landing.

Just then, a boat came ashore with some sailors from the vessel which had rescued him; and as he sat, despairing and wretched, he overheard one of them saying to an acquaintance: "There is the man who swore he would get to Vera Cruz first, or be damned, or sink his brig; God Almighty was too good to damn him, and so He only sunk the brig."

These words pierced his heart as with an arrow. This was his own language; but we may rather compare them to a friendly probe, soon to be followed by the healing balm of His grace, who wounds but to make whole.

He immediately left the city, and wandered over the sandy plains which surround it, in a state of mind bordering on distraction. When almost famished, he was discovered by a benevolent man, whom he took to be a priest; and although no verbal communica-

tion could pass between them, yet the stranger's kindness touched and cheered his heart.

The spell of despair was broken; despair, which promotes nothing good, but brings forth evil, and only evil, and that continually, by perpetually reproducing itself; unless, through grace, trust and hope replace its dark shadows in the heart. An effect seems to have been produced upon his mind, similar to that described by a traveller in Africa, who was encouraged by the providential care shown in furnishing a small tuft of moss with sufficient moisture to preserve its vitality amidst the apparantly arid sand,—roused himself to new exertions,—found a spring,—drank,—and was saved.

So this poor, forlorn, and abandoned sailor, feeling himself an outcast from God and man, his heart pierced with a sense of ingratitude, and hardly daring to hope that God would yet bear with him, or hear his cry for pardon, was suddenly checked in the desperate ex-

posure, which must soon have ended his life, and led by human kindness, to hope in that divine mercy which awaits the chief of sinners, if truly penitent.

This prodigal son came to himself and sought his offended Father. Peace dawned in his dark and troubled heart. The details of his history between that time and his presenting himself as a worshipper and Christian brother at the Hill-side church, are not recollected; nor is his subsequent history known.

But we were impressed, as the reader may be, with this true instance of "grace abounding to the chief of sinners." It may teach us never to despair; and remind us of the important agency of the goodness of God in leading men to repentance.

The thought uttered in a spirit of profane levity, by a fellow transgressor, that God had been "too good" to take him at his word, was the sharp arrow that penetrated the brazen armor of this bold bad man's heart.

And it was this same "goodness," as illustrated in the kindness of a brother man, that changed, by the power of the Spirit, remorse and despair to penitence and hope.

Had not God been "too good" to cast us off without further opportunities and calls to repentance, where should we have now been? Our account, if rendered not with joy but with grief, will doubtless be far more grievous than would have been that of the ignorant man, neglected in childhood, and unrestrained in youth, whose sins against the goodness of God thus alarmed and humbled him.

Let none who have been forgiven be weary, either in prayer, or in well-doing, for the good of others. And let none who read these pages, however abandoned to sin, or apparently forsaken of God and man, despair of finding help from both.

Whose case can be more desperate, to his own view, or to Christians of little faith, than that of this reckless outcast? When

he was thoroughly humbled, he was quickly and highly exalted; not in a worldly respect, for he was still a poor laborer; but raised to newness of life in Christ Jesus, who says, ever in His word to all sinners: "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

Many have supposed themselves to be the chief of sinners; a very natural conclusion for an awakened conscience, while taking cognizance of the guilt of only one transgressor of the divine law.

But if all were greater sinners than the greatest that has ever lived, the fountain is large enough to wash away all their stains; and there need be no miracle of depravity, without its corresponding miracle of mercy.

THE BACKSLIDER RECLAIMED BY KINDNESS.

“Reverend and dear Sir; I am not in the habit of letter-writing; if I had been, I should long before this time have expressed gratefulness of heart, for the kindness received from you; left as I had been to fall away, and to bring shame upon myself, and reproach upon the cause of Christ, and to lose the confidence of former Christian friends.”

“You extended to me the hand of kindness, and words of encouragement that won my confidence. My heart has ever, from that time to this, glowed with the purest affection

towards you, feeling and believing that to you, through the grace of God, I owe my salvation, if, indeed, I am saved.

“I do feel that God’s goodness has been manifested to me and my family, from that time to the present, in the most signal manner. And I am unable with my pen to describe, or with my tongue to express, the gratitude of my heart to you for your kind words and attention, for which I trust we shall have cause to bless God through eternity.

“Had you, instead of kindness, shown to me a coldness, and like some, said; ‘he is too far gone, let him go,’ I should in all probability, long, before this time, have been in my grave.

“Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance; and now, my dear sir, I wish you to counsel your young brethren in the ministry, to extend the hand of kindness and affection to all backsliders. Words of

love, uttered in a right spirit, will melt the most stubborn heart.

“Thousands, I believe, only for want of some kind friend to take them by the hand, and say some word of encouragement, have gone down to a grave of infamy.

“Were I in possession of language to express the feelings of my heart, I would write volumes on this, as I think, too much neglected subject.

“Your humble and devoted friend,

“_____.”

The foregoing extracts are preserved, not because of any marked peculiarity in the cause, so far as now recollected, either as to its nature or its treatment. One may be excused for publishing the glowing language of an old man, who shows by it his own humility and gratitude, rather than any special merit of kindness or of wisdom on the part of his pastor.

The writer of the letter was at one time a

backslider, to an extent that subjected him to church discipline. That terrible scourge of the bodies and souls of men, and of the church which is the body of Christ, intemperance, had fastened upon him; thus furnishing a new illustration, — would that it had been the last in the Christian church, — of the propriety of taking special precaution against this form of temptation, and this frequent occasion of grievous falls.

He was remonstrated with; waited for, with prolonged patience, by his brethren: hoped for, almost against hope; and at length restored and confirmed as a steadfast member. And now in his old age, we have this testimony to the wisdom of the Apostolic counsel, to restore such an one in a spirit of meekness.

Discipline is, and we must fear ever will be, a part of ecclesiastical duty, — yet it is possible for it to be overdone, or attempted even when necessary, in a wrong spirit.

Still more frequently, perhaps, the very

necessity for discipline is caused, especially in the case of young disciples, by a neglect of that familiar intercourse and precautionary watchfulness on the part of older professors, which would exert so strong an influence in the right direction.

Nor is this all. If the general standard of piety in the churches were higher, how many spiritual dangers would the younger members escape! Is it reasonable to expect even the glowing heart of a recent convert, to retain the warmth of its early love to Christ, amidst the chilling influences of a worldly atmosphere in the church?

Such considerations, as well as others, should at least teach both ministers and members, the duty of great gentleness and patience, in dealing with offenders. In that case, we might more frequently have occasion to speak with gratitude, of backsliders reclaimed by kindness.

Many of those dissensions which have torn and disgraced particular churches, or even

spread with terrible centrifugal force through wider circles, commenced in needful discipline. Had it been in all such cases kindly commenced, and carried on with forbearance, and in the remembrance that none are without sin, the issue would have been very different.

“Let all your things be done with charity,” is an apostolic counsel, bearing as much upon this, as upon any other duty of the Christian life and profession. It is indeed, true, that “words of love, uttered in a right spirit, will melt the most stubborn heart,” if God add his blessing.

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THE CLERGYMAN'S PROFLIGATE SON.

“So you see, my old and steadfast friend, that it is better to weep over a son in infancy, than to groan over him in manhood.”

These were the words of a father, whose son, a hopeless prodigal, had wandered to this country, and was, for a time, an inmate of Mr. W.'s family at the hillside. I said a *hopeless* prodigal. It may well be supposed that his case seemed hopeless to strangers, when even a father's fond heart could cherish no more consolatory feelings than those expressed in the following extract from the same letter:—“Do not understand me that I have *no* hope; but it is only that faint and flickering light, by which Faith conducts the

almost despairing heart to Him, whose grace is as almighty as His will is sovereign." I quote from memory; and I trust there is no impropriety in holding up, as a warning to young men, and as a hint to parents, especially those who refuse to be comforted at the graves of infant children, the following sad fragment of the history of M.

My first knowledge of him was soon after his arrival, a wretched vagabond, in this country. It was a beautiful summer evening. I had the pleasure, a pleasure which I often enjoyed, of being one of a numerous circle around the tea-table at the "Cottage." Mr. and Mrs. W. had on this occasion several friends sharing their elegant hospitality, among whom were several ladies from London. A servant announced to Mr. W. that some one desired to see him at the door, adding that he refused to come into the house, but had seated himself on the steps of the piazza, apparently much exhausted. Mr. W. immediately left the table, and found the

stranger to be a young man in a sailor's dress, whose whole appearance indicated extreme poverty and wretchedness. He raised his hand, and fixing his eyes on the face of Mr. W. said, "If you will believe it, sir, I am the son of your old friend C——, C——."

"You the son of C—— C——!" replied Mr. W. "It may be so, but it requires rather more proof than your assertion, to satisfy me that I see in this miserable object the son of my old friend; but come into the house," he kindly added, "and after tea we will look into the matter."

The poor fellow at first refused, saying he was not worthy to come under such a roof, but was at length prevailed upon; and when we rose from the table, and entered the next apartment, our curiosity was gratified by a sight of the strange guest whose appearance and pretensions Mr. W. had described to us.

The scene was a striking one. The family

instinctively formed a semi-circle around the sailor boy who sat at one side of the room. The lamp upon the centre-table, which was within the semi-circle, shone brightly upon each member of the group. The white dresses of the ladies, and the aspect of the whole company, were strangely contrasted with the weather-beaten features, bearing marks of vice as well as of suffering, and with the soiled and tattered garments, of the poor outcast.

He cowered beneath the gaze which was bent on him, and seemed to shrink, gathering his hardly decent covering more closely about him, as if he would escape through the wall and hide himself from inspection. A few questions, to which he gave correct replies, together with his instant recognition of Mrs. W., remarking however a slight change in her appearance since he met her in France, when he was quite a child, established the at first incredible fact of his identity as a younger and once promising son of Rev. C—— C——,

an excellent and distinguished clergyman, a native of England. His sad history, partly then given by himself and afterward gradually developed by subsequent confessions, and for the most part confirmed by letters received soon after from the Continent, where his father then was, is, in few words as follows:—

He had been placed by his father, at an early age, at one of the best schools in France. His idle and dissolute habits, caused, as it was hoped, rather by the influence of evil companions with whom he unfortunately became intimate, than by any vicious disposition of his own, led to his removal to Edinburgh. Here he was soon joined by some of the same associates who had first allured him into the paths of vice. Being soon disgraced, and becoming involved in debt, he was ashamed to meet his father, and preferred the life of a wanderer. During the few years succeeding, he became, by turns, an inmate of a whale ship, a soldier in a

British regiment quartered in the north of Scotland, and a deserter, finding his way through Scotland and the greater part of England, on foot, supporting himself in part by sign-painting, and sometimes working as a common house painter. Having travelled in this way, as he asserted, sixteen hundred miles, he became tired of wandering, and presented himself to his father, then in France or Germany with his family, "the veriest vagabond," to quote again from the letter above referred to, "on the face of the earth."

A situation was then found for him in South America, which he lost by bad behavior on the voyage. After a while he obtained passage in a British vessel to Halifax, and thence to Boston. To the last place he "worked his passage" as a common sailor, and arrived in a state of destitution. Here a trifling circumstance brought to his mind Mr. W., his father's friend, and on inquiry, having learned in which of the New England

States he lived, he performed the journey, mostly on foot, and in due time presented himself, as already described, at B.

His whole deportment, was at first exceedingly humble. He declined being sent home to his father, declaring he could never see his face again, until he had something besides words of penitence to offer as a pledge of reformation. He earnestly desired occupation in obscurity, if it were even labor in a mine, until he could regain a character.

Not even the prodigal son was treated with more kindness by his own father, than was this poor outcast by his father's friend. And although, with the garb of a gentleman, he reassumed not only the manners and conversation of a well educated person, but a self-complacent air, altogether unsuitable to his late character, yet his sad history, and his apparent strong desire to do right, interested us all in his behalf. For a few months his conduct, though not unexceptionable, was on the whole encouraging.

A situation was obtained for him, as a teacher of the French language. And so long as he adhered to the solemn pledge of total abstinence, not only from distilled liquors, but "from all that can intoxicate," which Mr. W. had at the very outset induced him to subscribe, his prospects seemed fair. But in an evil hour a well-meaning but mistaken friend, at whose house he was visiting, offered him a glass of cider. Receiving it at such hands,—for it was both a temperate and a pious man who offered it, the temptation could not be resisted. With that draught, his appetite for stimulating drink returned in its old and dreadful strength. Cider, wine, and ale, became his frequent beverages. The evil was made worse by the necessity of his boarding at a public house. Mr. W. with his family being then at his town residence, and M's conduct having become so arrogant and his habits so bad, that no private family was willing to receive him, there was no other alternative, as he at this time

had charge of a French class in the village of L.

After some weeks he began to avow intentions of suicide, and somewhat ostentatiously displayed a phial of laudanum, which he constantly carried about his person. The cause which he assigned for this determination was the rejection of his addresses, by a highly respectable young lady, for whom he had conceived an ardent, and it is believed, honorable attachment. His natural impetuosity and ungoverned violence of character displayed itself, in his endeavors to terrify and compel the young lady and her friends to allow him an interview.

Things were in this state, when he called on me one evening at my residence a few miles from the village of L. He desired a private interview. When we were alone, he told me that he had come to bid me farewell, and to request me to execute some trifling commissions for him, as before the next morning he should "be a dead man." I treated

his declaration at first with indifference. He renewed it in the most solemn manner, saying he could not and would not live. After repeating his former requests, with some additional ones respecting his burial, &c., he began to arrange some papers he had brought with him, and of which he wished me to take charge, to prevent their falling into the hands of the people at the hotel. I took this opportunity to leave the room and consult some gentlemen who had called on business, as to the course proper for me to pursue. Our conclusion was, that although there was some cause for anxiety, yet the circumstances did not warrant any attempt at restraint or supervision. Before he left me I made a solemn appeal to him respecting the nature of the act which he avowed the intention of perpetrating. He heard me through, and replied that he did not come to ask my advice but my assistance. I parted from him at the door, not without some apprehensions, and yet with no sufficiently defi-

nite fears, knowing as I did his boastful and at the same time cowardly character, to make me willing to alarm the inmates of his boarding house, or by any direct efforts to attempt the frustration of his alleged purpose.

After an interval of two hours or more, as I was about to retire for the night, a messenger came in the greatest haste from the keeper of the public house in L., desiring me to come instantly and see M., who was dying by poison. I lost no time in obeying the summons, and on my arrival found the house in the greatest confusion. The passages leading to M's. apartment were filled with female inmates of the house, extremely terrified, and the chamber was crowded with men.

It appeared on inquiry that he had drunk the laudanum from a tumbler, and then going to his room, locked the door, undressed himself, and lain down to die. The tumbler had accidentally attracted attention and led to a discovery of the dreadful act. The door of

the chamber was then forced open, and attempts were made to arouse him from the state of partial insensibility which had already commenced. These attempts had in part succeeded, and when I entered the room two physicians were standing by his bedside urging him to swallow a potion which they had prepared. This he was sternly refusing to do, begging them to let him die in peace. When he saw me, he exclaimed, with a demoniacal laugh,—

“Ah, sir, you see I am not so great a coward as you took me for.”

“M—,” said I, “I have not come to bandy words with you; I have but one question to ask; and I charge you before you answer it, to think of your father and mother, whose gray hairs you are bringing down with sorrow to the grave, and of your God, before whom you are rashly attempting to hurry your wretched soul. My question is this,—will you voluntarily swallow this draught

which Dr. C. has prepared?" His reply was instant and firm,

"No! I will not."

"Very well," said I, "if you will not do it voluntarily, you must involuntarily." Then turning to the physicians I stated my determination to spare no pains and hesitate at no measures, however violent, under their direction, by which his life, though apparently useless, might be prolonged, so that his excellent parents might at least be spared the agony of learning that their youngest son had died by his own hand. We immediately engaged in a series of efforts of the most severe and unremitted description, which he resisted for hours with a convulsive strength that astonished us all, and in the course of which he was once left strangled and apparently lifeless.

From this condition, however, he was aroused by the most powerful stimulants, and at length our endeavors began to succeed. Although with oaths and curses he resisted

the efforts of nature, yet his stomach finally rejected the deadly agent, and towards morning I left him exhausted and feverish, with his mouth much lacerated by the violence we had been compelled to employ,—but out of danger.

The next day I saw him again. He was suffering both from the effects of the poison and of the remedies which had been used, but showed no signs of compunction. His spirit was untamed. He did not thank us for saving his life, and expressed the wish that we had allowed him to die. When told that at one time he was thought to be dead, and that if the effort to force the medicine down his throat had been persisted in, another minute, he would never have breathed again, he exclaimed in the most hardened manner, "O! why did you not hold on, that other minute."

He would not promise to abstain from similar attempts in future, though as a mark of gratitude to his host and hostess for their kind attentions, he assured them that he

would never trouble *them* in the same way again. He soon left the place, undertook to teach in the city of B——, but without success, owing to his intemperate habits, and whether yet living I know not. If these pages should ever meet his eye, let him remember that God will never refuse to forgive and save the penitent, to whatever distance they may have wandered, and however vile and wretched they have become.

But to return to the scene of attempted suicide. Never have I beheld so horrid and at the same time so instructive a spectacle. More than once I stepped out upon the upper piazza of the house, that I might breathe the fresh air of midnight, and reassure myself, by looking at the bright moon and the beautiful landscape, and enjoying again the stillness of a summer evening, that I was not a visitor in the abodes of despair. Execrations, profane jests, prayers for death, and messages to the object of his affections, were intermingled in

a manner of which no description could convey the full idea.

When the clock in the neighboring steeple gave out the hour of midnight, he exclaimed, with apparent solemnity, "Great God, before twelve o'clock to-morrow I shall be in thy presence!" In the next breath he uttered a witticism upon what he called the bungling practice of the "Yankee Doctors," and advised them in future to have more efficient means at hand for similar cases. From the whole scene, dreadful and revolting as it was, I endeavored to extract some good, especially to the mixed company who crowded the chamber during the greater part of that fearful night.

In reply to my inquiries as to the origin of all his vice and wretchedness, he assured me that IDLENESS was the first downward step he had taken. This led him to various methods of "killing time," such as drinking, gaming, and theatre going, which lead so many young men down to the gates of death. He was the

child of hope, of affluence, and of prayer. Yet IDLENESS proved his ruin. Let the young man who reads these pages remember his sad confessions, made at a moment when he expected soon to die. Let him shun idleness, as he would avoid the outer circles of a whirlpool. If diligence is to be considered as one of the "minor moralities" of life, it is no less true that it saves from some of the grosser vices. For the want of it M. was ruined. With advantages such as few enjoy, he plunged himself to a depth which few in this world are suffered to reach. This slight sketch can give but a faint impression of its horrors.

Let the parent, too, who finds it difficult to say concerning a sick or deceased child, "Thy will be done," be reminded that God knows what is best, and perhaps inflicts this blow to save him from a heavier one. Light in comparison would have been the agony of his parents if he had died in infancy, to that which wrung their hearts daily for many

years of his life. Yet how often is such a bereavement regarded as too heavy to be borne! I add but a single word. If the "Clergyman's Profligate Son" is yet alive, may there be occasion to write another and a very different chapter of his history. A chapter corresponding to the parable of the Prodigal Son, of whom it was said: he was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. With God all things are possible.

THE WIDOW'S MISSIONARY SON.

Among the many delightful excursions, combining pleasure and usefulness, of which the cottage mansion at the hillside was the radiating centre, a visit to the mother of a missionary can never be forgotten by those who shared it.

It was a lovely summer morning, when Mr. W. invited his pastor to accompany him and a part of his family in a ride to the town of F., some fifteen or twenty miles distant.

The object of the excursion was not fully stated; and our attention was absorbed, while on the road, by the quiet beauty of fields and groves, among which, in the New England fashion of the olden times, the winding road pleasantly led us.

At length, after some inquiry, we found ourselves at the house we were in search of. It was unpainted and unadorned; but comfortable in its aspect, and overshadowed by some of those fine old trees which are gradually replacing the original monarchs of the forest, so ruthlessly sacrificed by our early settlers. Sacrificed, I suppose, in *all* new countries, to that spirit of the woods, never heard of, till man visits them, — which may be called the genius of “clearing up.”

Waiting till his clerical coachman had secured the horses, Mr. W., taking out from the carriage various parcels, and distributing them among us, led the way up the pleasant path and into the open door. Turning to the right we entered, unannounced and unchallenged, a spacious apartment, in which extended on a couch, lay a venerable woman evidently in feeble health.

Just then, a younger person entered the room from an apartment in the rear, to whom Mr. W. put the inquiry;

"Is this the home of the Rev. ———, missionary to China?"

"It is, sir," was the reply.

"Is this," pointing to the lady already mentioned, "the mother of the Rev. ——— ———?"

"It is, sir."

"Peace be to this house; let us pray!" was the somewhat abrupt salutation of our eccentric friend, who suiting the action to the word, kneeled at once, and poured out his heart in a most fervent and impressive prayer for the missionary son, and the missionary mother too, whom God had honored by allowing her thus through her offspring, to preach the gospel to the heathen.

At the close of this exercise, which, with the attending circumstances, will never be forgotten by those who witnessed and shared in it, the first thing after mutual self-introductions, was to quiet the apprehensions of both the mother and sister. They, from the manner in which the interview was commenc-

ed, and from some expressions employed in the prayer, as to God's having "taken away" this beloved son and brother from those who loved him, had begun to fear that he had indeed been called to a celestial abode on high, before his missionary errand to the "Celestial Empire" on earth had been begun.

Then followed the presentation of a miniature, and other parting gifts, sent by the missionary at the time of his embarkation from New York; — gifts which had not, it is thought, to say the least, been diminished in number or value on the passage.

Substantial comforts were not usually forgotten by our friend, while he essayed to impart some spiritual gift.

Among other deeply interesting matters pertaining to this interview, it is well remembered that the venerable lady was asked, if she had other sons. On her replying in the negative, it was remarked to her, that she must have found it a great trial, to give up

her only son to such a work, in a far off field of labor, from which, feeble as she was, she could hardly hope for his return, even on a visit, during her life.

With the utmost dignity of simplicity and godly sincerity, she replied. "Yes, it was a trial, and I expect to feel it as long as I live; but you know, sir, we read that God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life; and I should be a poor miserable sinner indeed, if I was not willing to give up my only son to serve that blessed Saviour, and help my fellow men in knowing his name, and being saved through his precious blood."

The interview ended. Not, as it had begun, between strangers; but between friends and fellow servants, beloved for the common Friend's and Master's sake. It has never been repeated. It never *can* be, on earth. That Christian mother is now doubtless beyond the reach of all trials, and beyond the

possibility of making sacrifices. Does she regret that she did what she could, and gave the best treasure she had to bestow on a Friend so beloved, and for an object so dear to His heart and her own? She feels now, it is to be presumed, even more deeply than while on earth, that it was an honor as well as a pleasure to have such a gift called for and accepted by the Master. So another mother with seven children, herself received in early youth to the hillside church, once remarked concerning some discussions as to the duty of the parental consecration of children: "all *that* has been long a settled matter with us; if God will so far honor us as to take one, or more, for His service in the missionary work, they shall be His."

But now we pass on, nearly a quarter of a century. The missionary to China has well fulfilled the office of a bishop of souls, and of a healer of bodies. Under the guidance and aid of the great Physician of soul and body, he has done a vast amount of good, and re-

linquished his official relation to the church, only when, in the service of the State, he could exert a more effectual influence in behalf of those unhappy millions.

And now, we find ourselves in a scene of wild confusion and distress. The hand of malice has obstructed one of those iron pathways, on which hundreds of human beings with more faith in man than is usually cherished in God, trust themselves to be rapidly borne, in the darkness of night.

To the loud crash succeed the groans of the wounded and the screams of the terrified. And now the call is for help. Surgical skill, especially if combined as it often is, with firmness, humanity and power to control others, how desirable just then! And it is not wanting. The voice of command is soon heard. Arrangements for amputation, and other terrible necessities in surgery and humanity, are promptly and authoritatively made. Kind words too, are not wanting. One voice, especially, is heard in the dark-

ness of that long weary night, soothing the excited, and cheering the desponding, and by turns reproving the reckless crowding of some around the wounded, and the selfish supineness of others, who care not for the comfort of the sufferers, so that they are not disturbed.

See here again the only son of that widowed mother! God in accepting her gift, had fitted him for His service, at home or abroad. And after ministering to wretched thousands at the antipodes, he had returned to find, within a few miles of his native village, a field on which for a night his education, in all its branches, both scholastic and practical, might find ample scope and verge enough; honoring his Master and the missionary work, by the display of qualities which would be an honor to any profession, and a means of comfort and benefit to any sufferers, either in Asia or America.

Such, through the grace of God, was and

is, and it is to be hoped long will be, the widow's missionary son.

Are there no other sons, not yet dedicated? No other Christian mothers, or fathers, not yet awake to the possible honors and pleasures, aye, and *duty* too, of such domestic arrangements? Other plans and prospects for our children engross the attention and spread joy through a household.

It is written by the pen of inspiration, concerning a man diligent in his business, that "he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." Doubtless many a parent, who reads these pages, would rejoice much to have his or her son live to stand in honor even at a semi-civilized court, "glittering with barbaric splendor, pearls and gold."

But what station think you, Christian brother or sister, appears most desirable in the view of that once widowed mother, now set down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, with all her departed believing connexions, in that world where they neither marry nor

are given in marriage, except as the church is the bride of Him who has loved her with an everlasting love ?

Which "commission" given and accepted, faithfully discharged, seems to her, most full of honor to a son and to his family ? That expressed by our blessed Lord, when He said, with his last terrestrial breath ; "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature ;" or that with which one earthly government charges its envoys to another ?

Happy those servants of Christ who having obtained for themselves a "good degree" among men, and still having "great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus," find enlarged opportunities of serving God and benefiting their race.

But though we may not, for ourselves or our children, aspire to this double distinction, yet the honors of a Christian missionary are within the reach of many Christian youth :

and of the blessedness of giving a son or a daughter to this work, there is no monopoly.

What young man or woman who loves the loving, self sacrificing Saviour, but must desire the former? What Christian parent, even if a widow, would shrink from the latter, though it should involve a temporary separation from an only son?

How long, while the harvest is so great, shall the laborers be so few?

YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

This declaration was evidently designed, not for apostles and ministers as such, but for all Christian disciples. It is shown, by the whole tenor of Scripture, to have an application, not only to the modes in which the light of gospel truth is publicly diffused, as by preachers or writers; but also to that silent and often unobserved influence, which distils as the dew, from the warm hearts and pure lives of private Christians, and wakeful, consistent churches.

It is worthy of notice, that many instances of their own usefulness, which come to the knowledge of Christian ministers, are con-

nected, in the mysteries of a gracious Providence, not with what they have done in their public, ministerial capacity, but with those private efforts, such as conversation, writing letters, lending books, and giving tracts, which the humblest brother or sister in the churches may do, as often, and in many cases as well, as their pastors. Perhaps neither the ministry nor the laity are fully aware, how large a proportion of the good they accomplish, is to be traced to example; and to the various silent influences which flow out from a good man's life. It is a sad thought, that by the application of the same principle, we may stand convicted of an amount of mischievous influence, beyond computation.

Situated as was the hillside church, whose memoir, as that of the departed and yet ever living, we are contemplating, its silent, indirect influence was very important. Either for good or for evil, that church and its individual members must of necessity have been known and read of all men, in a wide region.

Nor is the handwriting yet blotted out. Many in that neighborhood neither knew nor loved the truth; and were gaining their first distinct information and impressions concerning practical religion, from this little band of evangelical believers.

That they were in all cases "known" thoroughly, and their characters rightly "read," could not be expected; nor can it be hoped that they were always "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without" just "rebuke." And yet there was, and is still accruing, as tardy justice comes following the footsteps of time, evidence that this city set on a hill did let its light shine. Many took knowledge of the disciples, that they had been with Jesus; and seeing their good works, glorified God.

One who was for a time connected with that church, writes as follows:

"Early in the spring of 1830, I left my native hills, to seek employment abroad; and providentially fell in with Mr. S., the manager

of Mr. W's farm, and made arrangements to work with him the ensuing season.

"My heart was warm at that time, I trust, with the first impulses of a Saviour's love. The first leading fact noticeable in the church, was their affectionate spirit toward their pastor and each other. Charity, union, and brotherly love continued and abounded. The history of that church demonstrates the power of the gospel of Christ, when exemplified in the lives of Christians.

"The Cross seemed to form a centre around which the doctrines of salvation clustered, and in which the warm hearts of the new born soul and the mature disciple, found a bond of union.

"An illustration of the power of earnest prayer and faithful effort, was furnished in the family of Mr. S. The first season he spent on Mr. W's farm, he employed four men, only one of whom was a professor of religion. At the end of six months, the other three were rejoicing in the gospel hope.

"They were all made special subjects of prayer, by Mr. and Mrs. S., who often and earnestly entreated them to consider their eternal welfare; until they were permitted to rejoice in their conversion. One of them became a missionary to the heathen.

"Another conversion followed in the winter; and the next summer four others in the same family; and these were only specimens of corresponding cases of fidelity and usefulness in the church.

"Many have gone to their reward; but who that remain can look back, and not see the hand of God, employing human agency in disseminating evangelical truth in that vicinity?"

Another brother writes:

"E. B. went to church; noticed the peculiar ardor and love of the brethren, and was induced to enter the Sabbath school. Here an address concerning the children of Israel in the wilderness, impressed him. He was surprised to see with what zeal and interest

the members of the church conversed together at intermission.

“These things, followed by repeated conversations held with him by the pastor in the cornfield, were the principal instruments in his conversion, which soon occurred, with that of another young man, his associate.”

These records of personal effort, and the diffused light of an earnest church, are not preserved as being very remarkable; still less as implying that those disciples were faultless.

There was often occasion for exhortation and reproof; while the then youthful reprover can now see, even more clearly than at the time, his own manifold short comings.

But the very existence of such a church in such a region, was a perpetual light, since the light that was in it was not all darkness. And whatever comforts a city pastorate may involve, with a large and strong body of believers, in close contact with each other, so far as proximity of residence and facility of

meeting together are concerned, yet such a country pastorate as we are now reviewing, is associated in the memory with still closer unity of fellowship, produced in part by outward pressure; and with many delightful illustrations of the power of a little leaven, if it be of the true kind, to make itself felt to a wide extent.

The pulpit has its appointed place, and its legitimate work; but the prayer-meeting, the Sabbath school, and the manifested zeal and love of even a feeble band of Christian disciples, often have a power little short of miraculous.

The time and the place needed such demonstrations: and the Head of the church bestowing the influences of the Spirit upon His people, drew forth a power which proved mighty, through God, to whom be all the glory.

May all our churches seek strength from on high, that they may show the power of

faith in their prayers, and the power of godliness in their lives.

It is departing somewhat from the specific field of retrospective observation on which we have entered, to introduce under this head some facts, communicated in close providential connection with the compilation of these fragments, by a lay brother in another country church.

But they are so interesting, and so beautifully illustrative of several modes in which private Christians, as well as the more public servants of the church and of the Saviour, may let their light shine, that I cannot withhold them.

“March 17, 1855.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR:—I believe you love to notice the hand of Providence, which would still oftener show us the divine wisdom, if we could penetrate the mystery which envelopes it. Shall I give you another leaf from my own experience?

"I was much interested some years since, in a young girl, who acted as nurse to a dying relative of mine. She was very kind, and seemed to lack only piety, to make her all we could wish. She evidently was always glad to see me in the sick room; and from some of her remarks, I was satisfied that she put confidence in me as a Christian.

"The lady died; and the girl left that part of the country, for two or more years. I often thought of her, with a yearning desire for her good. Calling at a neighbor's house one Saturday evening, I was told she had returned, probably to die with consumption.

"This news sunk deep; and I left without saying a word. The poor girl's image was before my eyes, and I could think of nothing else. The solemn question came with power: 'Shall I let that young person die, without one effort for her salvation?'

"I attended family duty, and my household retired. But I could not go, nor could I

sleep if I did. Yet how should I approach her? I might not gain access to her for that errand, which I felt I *must do*.

"Something must be done without delay. I threw some wood on the fire, got a sheet of paper, tried to pray for wisdom, and wrote as I was led. I then fell on my knees and prayed for a blessing. I do think if ever I prayed I did then.

"It was midnight when I retired. The next morning I took the letter, and on my way to meeting, saw one of her neighbors, and gave it to him, and at night she had it. In about a month she died; and all I could learn was, that she had a trembling hope.

"*Eight years after*, I learned that she dated her first impressions from that letter. You may well suppose, dear sir, that I wished at that time to be alone for a moment; and that I felt myself more than a thousand fold repaid, for that hour or two of self-denial. The thought of that Saturday evening often cheers and rejoices me; and it all seemed to

turn, in the sovereign wisdom of God, on my calling just as my informant came home.

“I presume it will not tire you to read one more instance of God’s gracious providence.

“After our pastor’s death, we were often destitute of preaching; and our prayer meeting drooped, and threatened to die. It was indeed a *cold* winter; and I would have given anything to see one inquiring soul.

“As I often had to lead the prayer meetings, I felt the want of coöperation, and of Divine aid; but felt a determination to stand in my lot, and if the meeting died, not to have the fault mine. The lower it sunk, the stronger I felt in the Lord, the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble. All the negligence and wickedness around me only seemed to dishonor God.

“One cold Sabbath evening, I started for the prayer meeting. I could not persuade any of my family to go with me. The distance was two miles, over a cross road,

which was in such a state that I could only walk my horse, in the face of the piercing wind.

"I felt like weeping, because none would go with me. But I went, and I felt that God was present. I had freedom in supplication, and I forgot the fewness of numbers. As I was going out, I noticed a neighbor's daughter. Her presence struck me with surprise. She away down there in the cold, and professors of religion at home!

"I invited her to ride; and on entering into conversation, found her tender-hearted and anxious to hear. I watched her afterwards, prayed for her, and now and then whispered a kind word in her ear; and in six weeks, she told me of a happy change.

"All this seemed to turn on the circumstance, so trying to me at the time, that none would go with me. Had it been otherwise, I should have lost the good opportunity I so gladly improved. To God be all the glory.

"Respectfully yours,

" ——— ———."

Instances might be multiplied, from the history both of country and city pastorates everywhere, of the Divine blessing attending faithful lay effort.

Even little children, if they love the Saviour, may be lights in the world; to guide and to bless some souls, at least, within the narrow circle of home.

Such was the little boy of the Hillside Sabbath school, who having given his heart to Christ, was watched by his brothers to see if he was truly converted. They ingeniously resolved to test the reality of the supposed change, by striking his bare feet, as he came down one morning, with the switches used in driving the cattle. He bore the trial well; and they were compelled to say: "L—— must be a real Christian, or he would have been mad."

Another dear little lamb of the same flock, should also be mentioned; and thus the light diffused and perpetuated, which Christ kindled in her young heart.

Staying at home with her mother, on the day when the "Country Pastorate" was inaugurated by prayer, and the laying on of hands, she said to her mother: "We are having a pastor placed over us to-day, are we not?"

"Yes, my dear."

"And that means a shepherd, does it not? And don't you think, mother, that now your work is done it would be well for us to go up stairs, and pray for a blessing on our pastor, that God would make him a *good* shepherd, and help him to lead all us lambs to Christ?"

Joyfully the mother assented. Joyfully would all pastors, and the Great Shepherd too, see such a light shining from the hearts and lives of all, whether old or young, who profess to know the love of Christ.

May all such, who read these pages, hear Him saying to His true disciples, not "Ye ought to be," but "*Ye are*, the lights of the world." If we shed no light, are we not,

ourselves, walking in darkness? A meteor which is dark, what is it, but a wandering star?

In two houses, each containing two families connected with the congregation at B., there were, including persons employed in various labor, forty hopeful conversions in four years. Knowing the heads of those families as he did, the pastor could not but find, in those cheering occurrences, an illustration of our Saviour's words, Matt. 5: 16.

I cannot close this chapter, without following, and inviting the reader to follow, certain members of the Hillside Church to a distant and different scene, in which, with other Christians, of various names, but with one heart, they seem to an occasional visitor, to exemplify these words of our blessed Lord, in one of their most important applications.

Perhaps, at this day of travelling and of pleasure seeking, and when so many whose home is in a large or small city, spend their summers in the country, no problem is more

important in itself, or more difficult of practical solution, than this: "How may Christians let their light shine when away from home; and whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, by way of rest and recreation, as well as of labor, do all to the glory of God?"

That this result is fully attained by the happy group usually gathered in the summer at the Mansion House, W—— L——, N. Y., cannot be safely affirmed. Doubtless they are conscious, at the close of each season, not to say each day, of having done many things that they ought not to have done, and of having left undone many things that they ought to have done.

But let us look in upon them. A visitor approaching the place after a long ride by car and coach, sees little by the fading daylight, to attract his attention. But he is soon warmly greeted by his personal friends, with devout expressions of gratitude for his safe arrival; and soon finds that here all are friends.

The evening meal is preceded by prayer; and the evening hours closed by the Word of God, and the voice of praise and supplication. Each morning and evening, and each visit to the social board, is similarly associated with acts of devotion. Thus every creature of God which is good and not to be refused, is sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer.

Then come works as well as words. A portion is sent to the hungry, or rather a delicacy to the sick; for in those Arcadian scenes little poverty can be found. A kind word here, a tract there, and pleasant smiles everywhere, lead those who are outside of the Mansion circle to bear spontaneous testimony, saying: "They are doing good all the time, and do not seem to know it. But God will surely reward them."

Even in their recreations they avoid the appearance of evil, and no gay son or daughter at home can say: "Our parents and our professing friends, when in the country, do as the world do."

Yet a happier, more cheerful company will rarely be found. Like the deer that drink at the waterside, or like the flowers whose names they sportively bear, the youngest and the most vivacious of the company chase the cloud-shadows, and shine in the sunlight, while their elders, with quiet humor and undissembled delight and affection, find rest and health in a seclusion so profound, and an atmosphere so pure.

But the Sabbath is here, as it should be everywhere,

“Day of all the week the best,
Emblem of eternal rest.”

There is no crowding of secular things, into its sacred hours. With the reception and eager distribution of the Saturday evening mail, all communication with the distant, busy world ceases for the week; and however thoughts may wander, the Sabbath talk is of Sabbath themes.

Churches of various names invite and

divide the company; divide it, only for a happy reunion, and a social rehearsal of the various outlines of truth and duty, to which they have listened.

A juvenile class in one wing; a young ladies' Bible exercise in another; a service held in the parlor by minister or layman; and last, not least, Mrs. ——'s exercise of recitations, scriptural and poetical, from all present, where taste in selection, and gracefulness of utterance, mark the social status of this refined and intelligent circle, fill up the evening hours, until the time for evening prayers.

Even the occasional excursions to neighboring or more distant objects of attraction, are marked in the memory of the rural population, by the distribution of good books, and by religious services at the wayside inns, which we must hope that He, who uses even the humblest instrumentalities, will cause to inure to His glory, and the good of men.

Thus, even in the wilderness, may every

member of the Hillside Church, and of all other churches, rural or metropolitan, hear the voice of one crying: Prepare ye the way of the Lord! May our light so shine, that all may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him, from his first recorded words, to be always about our Father's business. Then a light, above the brightness of the sun, will ever shine in Christendom, and from Christendom upon the dark world.

PEACE TO THE PERPLEXED.

Worldly disappointments and anxieties, aside from the testimony of facts, would seem likely to promote religious reflection, and thus to secure the soul's welfare.

That such is often the ultimate effect of providential chastisement, cannot be doubted. "Before I was afflicted," says the Psalmist, "I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." This is, however, more common in connexion with a previously formed, though imperfect, religious character.

Still, it must be admitted, that many, other than His children, whom the Lord chastens, find, at length, the peaceable fruits of righteousness, following the discipline.

But not, usually, at once. Even illness, severe bereavement, frightful casualties, or prevailing mortality in a community, more frequently have a tendency, at first, to divert an already thoughtful mind from spiritual meditations, than to guide the thoughtless to reflection and repentance.

Still more seldom, do pecuniary losses, and business perplexities, so common in these days of rushing enterprise, seem to produce any good spiritual fruit. The Saviour's words; "How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God," seem to apply equally to those who *have had* riches; especially while they are passing through the process of losing them, or of becoming accustomed to the loss.

There is so much to be thought of, so much to be done, by those who are in the midst of a pecuniary crisis, that like mariners in danger of instant shipwreck, they can have little care for the soul.

There are exceptions. And one of the

pleasantest memories of my ministry is connected with a spiritual history, partly related in a letter which will be found below.

The writer was a kind friend and attentive parishioner ; a man of liberal enterprise and extensive cares. He employed many workmen, and was compelled to make large pecuniary provision weekly for their payment and for other expenses. All this, in the best of times, demanded much financial skill, and untiring diligence ; and when, as in 18—, general embarrassment pervaded the business world, it was no wonder in his case, as in that of others, that busy days were often followed by wakeful nights.

It was therefore with a high degree of pleasure, and with renewed confidence in the power and grace of God, that we heard, in the midst of those perplexities, of the new peace which filled Mr A's heart.

He could now, as he said, after a busy and harrassing day, lie down to a quiet sleep, feeling that He who had sustained him thus

far, could carry him through another day; or would, with equal wisdom and kindness, if He saw it best, suffer his plans to fail.

But I will no longer detain the reader from the letter, which while it illustrates this particular point, and may serve as an encouragement to business men, not to wait till their perplexities are over, but to seek relief and salvation at the same abundant source of various benefits, also contains other thoughts, on which different classes of minds may profitably meditate.

May his present happiness and usefulness be shared by many a perplexed or doubting person, who reads his frank and lucid statements.

"S——, *Sept.* 22, 18—.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"It was my intention, long before this, to write to you; but my time has been so much engrossed by matters relating to my change of residence and of business, that I have found but few leisure moments. I am now

tolerably well settled ; and I trust I shall not be deprived of the pleasure of keeping up an occasional correspondence with some of my friends from whom I am separated by distance. Among those, I know you will allow me to give you a conspicuous place. I shall therefore take the liberty of writing to you occasionally ; and when your other avocations and your inclination will allow you, do not deny me the pleasure of hearing from you.

“ I very frequently find myself in a maze, in reflecting on the changes which have taken place in my lot within a few months. Sometimes it appears to me that I am dreaming, and that I shall awake and find myself, as I was one year ago, busily engaged in the world ; laboring with incessant application to consummate some favorite scheme, flattered by my hopes, and kept from sinking in the gulf of anxiety and care, by fond anticipations of success. But soon the sad reality presses itself upon me, that then, surrounded as I was by the brightness of the world, I

was literally groping in darkness, walking in fetters of sin, living without any real hope, because God was not in my thoughts.

“ You can easily imagine, my dear sir, that as I hope to have experienced a saving change in the temper of my mind, I have been anxious that you should know particularly the manner in which I have been led to this change. Circumstances as you know, prevented me from having such frequent, full, and free conversations with you on the subject, as I could have wished, and as I have no doubt would have been profitable to me. I have reason to thank God, that these circumstances, so trying, and so engrossing to my mind, as they necessarily were for a long time, did not operate to estrange me entirely from that God, to whom my attention had so recently been directed, and whom I had but just begun to know, and to love. Blessed be his name, and the power of his Holy Spirit, I was sustained under trials, which, without the consolations of religion, I verily believe would well-nigh have driven me to despair.

“I wish, then, to take this opportunity to relate to you, in as few words as I can, the particulars of the progress of my mind, and of the manner in which, as I confidently hope, I have been led by the influence of almighty power, to see, whereas, before, I was blind; and to embrace that Redeemer who would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. I do this, partly with a hope that through you my own case may afford some encouragements to others, to renounce the world, and seek the salvation of their soul. If, therefore, from the relation which I shall give you, you can derive a single suggestion, or be led to present any new motive to induce impenitent sinners to forsake their ways and follow after righteousness, do so, I pray you; and give the glory to Him to whom all glory belongs.

“You are undoubtedly aware that I have been considered, till within two or three years at least, a decided opposer to those views and practices which are denominated

evangelical. I have considered myself, and perhaps honestly and sincerely, a Unitarian; and I have, for many years, not only felt, but been at no pains to conceal, a degree of opposition to orthodox views, which very nearly approached bitterness and contempt. With very little reflection, and with no careful study of the Scriptures, I adopted the views of Unitarians. Those views, the stated ministrations upon which I attended, and the society into which I was naturally led, had no effect to arouse me to a consideration of the value of my immortal soul; they had no tendency to warm my heart with love to God, or to awaken or cultivate in me any feelings of benevolence. They certainly did not lead me to a conviction of sin, nor to a true conception of that glorious redemption which has been wrought by Jesus Christ. It was this *absence of religion* in my heart, I am persuaded, and not any decided conviction that the views I entertained were the *truth*, or that those which I opposed were *error*, that engendered

in me such feelings of opposition. I did not realize that the natural heart was at enmity with God, nor had I any just views of the nature of sin. I confided in the efficacy of good works, and thought not that by grace I must be saved, through faith — and that not of myself, but by the gift of God.

“With these views and feelings, I attended upon the preaching of Dr. ———, as you know, for three or four years. For a while, I was satisfied with his preaching, and when the subject of religion, and the probability that Orthodoxy would make inroads into L———, was discussed, I always joined in that fatal, delusive wish, that the *peace* of the town might be preserved, and that the harmony of Dr. ———’s society might not be disturbed by the introduction of fanatical preachers within its limits. But by and by, in those intervals of reflection and self-examination with which I presume all are exercised, I began to feel that something was wanting; that I did not take an interest in the sermons

which I heard, and that no good impression was produced upon my mind. I looked around me, and I thought I could discover that no practical good seemed to result from the preached word in L——; that church members were openly immoral, and that very few seemed to be living and acting from the high motives of religion. My opposition to Orthodoxy began to lessen; I was more willing to believe that its professors were influenced by a sincere conviction of duty in spreading what they believed to be the truth; but still I regarded them as laboring under a delusion, and as entertaining narrow and illiberal views of the character of God, and of the duties of Christians. It was while in this state of mind, that I heard without any feelings of regret or opposition, that an attempt was to be made to establish a new society at B——. The meeting-house there was built, and all the arrangements made for establishing a society, forming a church, and fixing the standard of Christ permanently on

that beautiful eminence, as you well know, amidst the bitter and obstinate opposition of the great mass of the people of L——. In this opposition I did not join. Almost alone among those with whom I daily associated, I, to say the least, regarded with complacency, the movements which were making in B——. Without having my understanding convinced that the Orthodox views of religion were true, and that they ought to be propagated; and without being prompted by any desire of my heart for the spread of the truth as it is in Jesus; I was led, by the inscrutable wisdom of God, to feel kindly towards that undertaking, and to raise my voice even, against the reproaches which were heaped upon those who, in the name of the Lord, were thus striving to enlighten that dark region. I felt a great degree of interest in the preliminary arrangements for the establishment of the house of God. I remember that I attended the ceremony of laying the corner stone, and that I felt glad in my heart to witness the

scene — but I did not sympathize with those friends of the pure gospel of Christ who felt that they were thus laying the foundation of a banqueting-house for those who were famishing for the bread and water of life. I took the same indescribable sort of interest in the ceremonies of dedication and ordination. I could not then have told why I thus felt, nor would it have been possible for me to have described the motives by which I was actuated. But I can now see in it all, the wisdom and mercy of that God, who has declared that he will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; that he will lead them in paths that they have not known; and make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. How good is God, and how great is his love, which thus draws us away from the snares of the world, which beset us for our evil, and snatches us from the burning, while our own eyes are shut to our danger. And how wicked is man, and how strong the enmity of his heart to God, that he can resist

such love, and turn away from such invitations.

Thus prepared by the goodness of God, you can imagine that it was without much reluctance that I yielded to the request of my wife, that we should make B——— our permanent place of worship, whenever there should be a minister settled there. Our attendance there commenced soon after your settlement; but for a long time it could only be said to be occasional, for as yet my heart was hardened, and I turned away from the truth. The cares of the world engrossed almost all my thoughts, and literally choked the word, and made it unfruitful. I thus attended upon the preaching of the gospel, there, for two or three years. I can attest to your faithfulness in declaring to your hearers the whole counsel of God; in warning, reproof, and instructing them from his holy word; and in urging upon them the invitations and encouragements of the gospel, to be reconciled unto him. But, as I said before, the

word was choked by the cares of the world; and if the seed of truth fell into my heart, (as I know it frequently did,) it was as by the wayside, and Satan came immediately and took it away, lest I should believe and be saved.

“I continued thus resisting the influences of the Holy Spirit — being irregular in my attendance at meeting, and sometimes even going with great reluctance — seldom reading the Bible, and never with pleasure; occasionally approving of sermons which I heard, and giving the hearty assent of my understanding to doctrines which were advanced; but more frequently being restless and impatient under the reproofs which the gospel, when exhibited in its simplicity and power, invariably carries home to the heart of every sinner. It was when the natural heart was portrayed as at enmity with God — when the necessity of regeneration was insisted upon — when external purity and good works were declared to be insufficient of themselves

to ensure salvation — when we were said to be condemned by the law of God, and yet had no means of justification by that law — when conviction of sin, and repentance, and entire submission to God, and faith in Jesus Christ were pointed out as the only means of pardon and salvation — it was then that I tried to persuade myself that such were not the requirements of the law of God, or that if so, that law could not be holy, just and good — it was then that I found a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.

“My mind, I am persuaded was thus tending to infidelity. The grand doctrines of evangelical faith were stumbling-blocks in my way: I could not make them bend to the inclinations of my heart, and they seemed to me to be frightful dogmas, which would forever impede my progress to any thing like a religious life; and if I was at any time peculiarly impressed with my obligations to God,

they would rise up against me as it were, and obliterate every good impression.

“During the summer of 18—, the sickness and death of my partner had, undoubtedly, a salutary effect upon my mind. I had daily conversations with him upon the subject of a future life. He spoke freely and cheerfully of his approach to death—he enjoyed the most confident hope that he was about to pass into a world of happiness, where he should be received to endless felicity through Jesus Christ, for whose sake he believed all his sins had been pardoned. In our conversations, we seldom alluded to points of doctrine. He, however, constantly expressed his full and entire belief in the divinity of the Saviour. Christ he considered his all, his only support; and he placed the firmest reliance in his all-sufficiency as a Saviour for him, and the fullest confidence in the efficacy of faith in his atoning sacrifice upon the cross. He manifested so much patience and resignation during his sickness; was so happy in the

thought of the change he was about to undergo; and at last so calmly resigned his spirit into the hands of Him who gave it, that my heart must have been hard indeed, not to have been led to the reflection, that there was something of reality in that faith, which could thus lighten up in the soul of a dying man a hope that made death itself a welcome visitor.

“My partner’s death threw an additional load of care upon my already overtasked mind; and for a while it seemed as if every good impression I had received would be entirely effaced, and that I should sink under the burden. The great commercial distress, which visited us last year like a plague, soon followed, and added greatly to my anxiety. Night afforded me no rest, and every day brought with it some new and heavier responsibility. I was truly miserable, and began to grow weary of even life itself. But thanks be to God, who was working in me to will and to do of his own good pleasure. I was

led by the influence of his divine Spirit to pause and consider my ways. My affections had been placed too much upon the world, and the infinite wisdom and goodness was thus creating in me a disgust for its vanities, and preparing me to forsake its pursuits for things which concerned my eternal interests. A lecture which you preached about this time in the —, on the subject of there being in the sight of God but two classes of people, the righteous and the wicked, the friends and the enemies of God, led me, amidst all my cares, to ask myself upon which side the Judge of all the earth would class me. I began seriously to examine myself, and I need not tell you that I came to the conclusion that I was indeed an enemy to God, and a stranger to the riches of his grace. Being thus brought to the full conviction that I was living a life of sin against God, and that there was but one alternative for me; either to continue to be his enemy, or to yield an entire, unconditional, uncompromising submission to

his will, I was, by divine grace, enabled to choose the latter. I did, as I hope, submit, and my proud heart was humbled before the throne of his mercy. Here I found that peace I had so anxiously desired; that peace which the world can neither give nor take away; peace in believing on Jesus Christ, and the holy consolation of knowing that in him could be found a ransom for all my sins, and through his grace salvation unto eternal life.

“The difficulties which, in my mind, had hung around the subjects connected with religious truth, now seemed to vanish. The heart once humbled in view of its sinfulness, and the eyes are opened to behold wondrous things out of the law of God. The God of heaven and earth hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, but reveals them unto babes. I no longer found difficulty in regarding *him* as the Creator, whom I had considered only a created being; and I experienced the blessed reality of that promise of the

Saviour: Come unto me, ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

“I do not, as you perceive, date the change which I hope has taken place in my heart, to any particular moment or day; and sometimes I have almost been led to doubt whether I was indeed a subject of renewing grace. But when I perceive that my heart has lost its strong hold upon earthly things—that I am inclined to disregard the allurements and temptations of the world—that my affections turn to God, and the joys of heaven, as only worthy of pursuit—that in fine, I seem to be influenced by new and entirely different motives of action, and to be led continually into a new current of reflection, I cannot doubt that the Spirit of all truth has led me out of the darkness of sin and error, into the marvellous light of the knowledge of

the glory of God. And though I have continually to mourn over great coldness — and though the natural inclination of my heart to forget God, and still cleave to the world, admonishes me to unceasing watchfulness — yet I find the evidences of this change growing stronger in an increased love of the study of the Scriptures; a greater delight in prayer; a relish for the company of Christians; and a disposition to attend upon all means of grace, and to be doing what my hands find to do for the Redeemer's cause.

“But I must bring this too long letter to a close. I am sorry to draw so largely upon your time, and must beg that you will make all proper allowances. I can only add that —, and —, and myself, have connected ourselves with the church, and thus publicly enlisted ourselves on the side of the Lord. Give us your sympathy and your prayers, that we may persevere unto the end — honoring God by our service, and being, in some humble degree, instrumental in extending the kingdom of Christ.

"Again entreating you to pardon this too long letter, and wishing you, through God's assistance, abundant success in your ministry, and happiness in all your concerns,

"I am sincerely, Yours,

" — — —."

Reader, are you perplexed, and would you find peace? See, here, an illustration of what the gospel can do. This peace of God, which passeth all understanding, can also keep *your* hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Not otherwise. It is not a mere general idea, of Jehovah's government, and of our dependence, that can avail to smooth down the waves of trouble, when in some dark hour they dash around us.

Nor will this peace come at our call, when it is sought as the chief end, as the direct and controlling object of our religious endeavors.

But if we feel, as did Mr. A., perplexed by the disturbed state of our relations to our

Creator and Redeemer, if the burden of sin is perceived, adding its oppressive weight to all else which bears heavily upon us; and if we go, as he went, to the foot of the cross, where Bunyan's pilgrim lost his burden, and find peace in believing in Jesus, then in addition to these spiritual blessings, chiefly promised and sought, the others may be hoped for.

Our peace will be as a river, with streams flowing from many directions, but from one infinite source, and bearing our souls to many pleasant shores,

“Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.”

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; *because he trusteth in Thee.*” Not because we desire peace, but because we penitently and lovingly trust our God and Saviour, He will, with pardon, freely give us all things that we need, and among the rest, peace in the midst of perplexity.

“PROVISION AGAINST THAT TIME.”

In the absence of all other evangelical organizations, throughout the wide territory over which the little flock of the Hillside Church was scattered, the pastor had frequent occasion to visit sick persons, of different denominations.

Among those friends of our Lord and Saviour, of various names, but with one heart while on earth, and many of them, we trust, now joining in one song above, Mrs. P., an excellent member of a Baptist church in Boston, holds a prominent place in my memory.

One of her remarks has so impressed itself upon me, as a kind of watchword, suggesting to Christians the duty, and the mode, of pre-

paration for the dying hour which will try both soul and body, that it finds a place on these pages, as it has heretofore in private counsels, and public ministrations.

Finding her unusually comfortable and cheerful one day, though she was never depressed, I said to her :

“ Mrs. P., you are very kindly dealt with. Did you expect, when in health, to find so much comfort in your last days ? ”

She replied : “ I have been accustomed, ever since the commencement of my Christian life, to look forward to these scenes, and try to prepare for them.”

She continued : “ I was much struck, many years ago, with the Scripture account of the passage of the Israelites over Jordan ; especially the care with which they were required to make provision for the journey. And ever since, I have been trying to lay up provision against that time, now apparently drawing near, when I must pass over the

Jordan of death, into the promised land, where my Saviour reigns."

She went on to explain her meaning, by referring to the promises and other texts of Scripture, the devotional hymns, and the habit of intimate communion with her Lord, and of familiarity with the thoughts of death and heaven, which answered, in her spiritualizing view of the passage, to the provision commanded by Joshua to be made, when he sent this word to the children of Israel: "Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you."

I ventured to ask her, what was the prospect, so far as she could then judge, as to the sufficiency of this spiritual provision, for the occasion, when it should arrive, as it seemed likely to do before a very long time.

With a gentle smile, and yet with great firmness of expression, she replied: "It has

nourished me so far, and I believe will hold out to the end."

It did. As the flesh sunk, the spirit rose. She seemed almost like an inhabitant of two worlds at once; lingering here, but entering **THERE**, where Christ is. And when at last she was called to make the passage, she appeared to find the waters neither deep nor dark.

Her soul was strong with the heavenly manna it had fed on, and illuminated by the lamp of the love of God. When she disappeared from our view, it was like the morning star, which

"Goes not down behind the darkened west,
Nor hides obscured amidst the tempests of the sky,
But melts away, into the light of Heaven."

How simple the process, and how precious the results, in those trying hours which await nearly all believers, of thus, by the word of God and prayer, and the use of other gracious materials of spiritual nourishment, laying up provision against that time.

All pastors can testify, with a fullness and earnestness proportioned to their extent of observation, to the importance of a specific preparation for those last sad days, perhaps weeks and months, of infirmity and decay; sometimes indeed shortened, and in a few cases of sudden death, wholly dispensed with.

Such peace as often attends those on dying beds, who have been familiar with the prospect, and intimate with that Friend, who can both sustain and comfort us in the dark valley, would be cheaply purchased by a whole life of self-denial; even if there were no hereafter, and no obligation to Him who loved us, and gave himself to die for us.

A provision against dark days, and one of great value, is to be found in cultivating a sense of the Saviour's presence *as a Saviour*, the Son of God, the Man of sorrows and of sympathies.

A beloved missionary, still living, Rev. S. H. C——, from this country, once remarked that he could hardly have sustained the soli-

tude and privations, which had been his lot during a long residence at a secluded station in Syria, without something more than the ordinary general impressions concerning the divine omnipresence.

To him the man Christ Jesus, He who had appeared for us and with us, in the flesh; and who had said, “ Lo! I am with you alway,” was a present realization. By day and by night; in sunshine and in storm; in health and in sickness, a *present Saviour* was the light, and health, and joy of his soul. In the absence of all other society, He was a constant companion; never absent, never weary, never unkind, never abstracted and unsocial, never forgetful.

Who has forgotten Henry Martyn, and that last entry in his journal?

“ No horses being to be had, I had an unexpected repose. I sat in the orchard and thought, with sweet comfort and peace, of my God: in solitude my company, my friend and comforter. Oh, when shall time give place to

eternity! When shall appear that new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness! There, there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth; none of that wickedness which has made men worse than wild beasts,—none of those corruptions which add still more to the miseries of mortality, shall be seen or heard of any more."

Thus far this fragment. What a glorious taking up of that broken thread of thought, when he found that companion, friend, and comforter, no longer on a Persian, but on the celestial plains.

Most Christians, in health, and surrounded not only by the cares and allurements of the busy glittering world, but by all the facilities which they may desire for fraternal intercourse with fellow disciples, have never been driven to such a personal reliance upon Him who is not ashamed to call us brethren. And as our hearts are, at their best estate, too insensible to spiritual attraction, even that which proceeds from the cross, tending to

draw all men unto Him who calls all men to come, it follows that many, neither drawn nor driven to that close proximity in which they would find both light and joy, walk in comparative darkness, seeing the light from the Cross only as a distant star, with little illuminating, and still less of warming, power.

How desirable, on the one hand, to cultivate, if we may so say, such a holy intimacy with this best, this heavenly Friend — even before being driven to it by circumstances; that when dark days and solitary hours arise, we shall not be compelled to seek, as a distant stranger, Him who so kindly offers to be, and whom we shall then so much need to find, a present and familiar Friend.

This, then, is the best possible “provision against that time.” If we walk with Christ in the sunshine, He will walk with us in the storm. If we set the Lord always before us, He will never turn his back upon us, and leave us to walk in darkness. Even the dark

valley shall be light; our last day shall be our best; and death itself, but a joyful resurrection of the freed spirit from the sepulchral body of sin and suffering.

HEARD IN THAT HE FEARED.

It is included within the divine power, and the gracious purpose, of our Redeemer, that He should deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage.

This deliverance, we may suppose, was intended to come, as it seems to come, in different ways. Some who during all their previous lifetime had been subject to bondage, through this apprehension of a change of worlds, are led, when they enter the way of life at the foot of the Cross, or afterward as they journey on in the narrow path, to such views of death in connexion with a dying, yet ever living Saviour, that the king of terrors loses both his dart and his frown,

and they can even listen cheerfully for his voice, as that

“ which Jesus sends
To call them to His arms.”

Others find their deliverance less easy and longer delayed. Moved, perhaps, rather by a nervous than a moral timidity; suffering through weakness of the flesh, rather than of the spirit, they remain, literally, all their lifetime, subject to this bondage. They find their deliverance, only in that blest hour, when the soul itself is delivered from the body of sin and death, and by a spiritual resurrection, soars on high.

In either case, how sublime the victory enjoyed by us and wrought for us, by our great Champion! “ That *through death*, He might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

The action and the actor; the incarnation and its object; the conflict and the victory; all was worthy of the GODHEAD, from whose

single heart the work proceeded; and whose brightest glories, never reflected from sun or star, have shone in Jesus' face, and beamed from His world-illuminating cross.

It were much, to the believer, if only in the second sense mentioned above, this death delivering power of a dying Saviour should be manifested.

Even if death continued to appear to all, while yet future, the king of terrors, and were revealed, when present, in an aspect no less repulsive, it would be much to be thankful for, that *after* death we should be delivered from the fear of it, and from the bondage of sin, which is its sting. That we should be able to look, not forward with trembling, but backward with rejoicing, and say, "We HAVE died, and behold, WE LIVE; like our blessed Lord, in dying we conquered death, though with a fearful struggle."

We may, however, hope and should humbly pray and strive, for more than this; not only that the act of dying may be robbed of its

terrors, through the glorious hopes which Christ's death has furnished, but that the painful anticipations of an event, which it is a part of our original nature to dread, may be repressed by the power of grace.

Sometimes, however, still another result follows the fears and prayers and hopes, of Christ's true disciples; such a result as occurred in the case of an aged member of the Hillside church, though afterwards connected with one of the branches of that spreading vine.

Rev. Mr. P—— had long been a Congregational minister in Massachusetts. Though he had retired from pastoral labor, to the pleasant village of L., he retained much intellectual as well as physical vigor; and was much esteemed and respected among the co-laborers in the new enterprise already described on these pages.

The glory of Christ was unceasingly clear to his spiritual vision, and the honor and love of Christ more and more dear to his warm

heart, the longer he lived, and the more he was permitted to do, and even, in the form of unkind words, to suffer, in the promotion of His cause.

From his clerical education and experience, "Father P——," as he was familiarly styled, was able to be of much service, in the several steps by which the new church was organized, and its affairs carried on. His venerable form in the pulpit, where, on account of his deafness, he always had a seat and a welcome, will never be forgotten, by any who remember the place or the preachers.

Mr. P. was a man of vigorous constitution, and a cheerful temperament. His enjoyment of life was keen; and he exhibited great sensitiveness to pain and distress in himself or others. Naturally, death was in itself an object not to be looked upon by him with indifference, hardly with calmness.

He could not say, with one of whom we read: "that among all the pleasant persons and things by which he might be surrounded,

there was always one grim and frightful visage,—that of death,—staring him in the face, and giving him constant pain ;” because even in the contemplation of that great change, our aged friend could perceive the accompaniment of unspeakable gain. But on the other hand, he was far from having such views of the event itself, even in connection with its consequents, as led another to say. “I have many dark clouds over my path ; I meet with many repulsive objects, and am often obliged to contemplate prospects which are far from agreeable ; but amidst the whole, there is one bright image ; one smiling face looks down upon me ; it is the visage of death, my deliverer from sorrow, my last friend on earth.”

But God provided some better things for Mr. P. than he, perhaps, dared to hope ; though he desired that when he should be ready, God would call him suddenly away ; and had been heard to utter petitions, if not directly to this point, yet indicating such a state of feeling.

One Monday morning, a nephew, who was then his pastor, entered the venerable uncle's house, as his custom was, and was met by the playful remark :

"I have just received a love letter from your father."

This was a brother of Father P——, himself also a minister, and not less venerable and estimable. Both had been in the revolutionary army of their country; both had for a long time been enlisted as soldiers of the Cross. Both were past active service; but their conversation was in heaven, and the tone of their mutual correspondence showed where their treasure and their hearts were.

The letter was handed to the nephew, with the request that he would read it aloud to his uncle and aunt. He did so. At the bottom of the first page, nearly these words occurred :

"It is not likely, my brother, that our correspondence will be much longer continued; for you and I have both arrived at that point

in the pathway of human life, whence it turns downward towards the grave."

The reader paused to turn over the leaf, and looking up in his uncle's face, *found that he was gone!* a few feeble breaths and a few fluttering pulsations, just while the pendulum of life was settling to its rest, after nearly fourscore years of strong and ceaseless oscillation, were all that remained. The wheel was broken at the cistern. The impelling power had ceased. Consciousness had departed, and the bitterness of death was, — not past, but escaped from, even while these fraternal words were falling upon his ears; and in a few moments all was over. "The beating heart stood still."

Appropriate, beautiful, yes even sublime termination of such a life! He was indeed, like his blessed Lord in another sense, "heard in that he feared." The sting of death was removed; and although he had no occasion nor opportunity to echo the apostle's exultant, defiant, death song, yet doubtless, when

he awoke to new consciousness in a world where only life is, and no death, he exclaimed or at least *felt*, with joy and gratitude unknown before: Thanks be unto God who has given me the victory, through Jesus Christ my Lord.

Not many years after, his excellent and lovely companion, followed him: herself the daughter of patriot sires, who had in council, as had her husband, then a stripling, in the field, labored to secure the blessing which we enjoy. May we, as a people, never part with them willingly, nor lose them by way of punishment for our many sins; and may we all, to whom though personally strangers, this record of the happy deliverance of one of Christ's servants from the pangs of a protracted death shall become a matter of joint memory, find ourselves, after whatever intervening steps our great Director shall see fit to appoint for us, — safe in that world, where none shall say, I am sick; and where death itself shall die.

God may not see fit to deliver us wholly, beforehand, from the fear of death. It is still less likely, that we shall be delivered, virtually, from dying, by having such an almost translation, without seeing death, as fell to the lot of this venerable man. He may even have in His infinite mind most important purposes, to be developed through the influence of our dying joys, or our patient endurance of protracted suffering.

But all that, at the longest, will be short. To fleeting time will succeed boundless eternity.

Then we shall fear nothing; for there shall be nothing left to fear. We shall hope for nothing; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for. Our prayers will be turned to praise; our groans to songs. This corruptible shall have put on incorruption; this mortal shall have put on immortality. Then, whether by a process similar to that now described as the happy lot of one good man, or

after the usual experience of dying hours—it matters little which, — shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.

THE PROTRACTED MEETING.

In the summer of 1831, the first experiments were made by the churches in that section of New England, by way of adapting to Congregational usage the system of continued services, which had been so long practised, with various results, among some other denominations, especially at the South and West.

Whatever may now be thought of the expediency of this mode of religious effort, its results at that time were undeniably of the highest importance; and under such careful and conservative management as generally prevailed at the period referred to, it had few if any objectionable features.

The grand idea was this: the continuous presentation of truth, without those interruptions of thought and feeling, which invariably arise from the various occupations of the week. What is gained on one Sabbath, is too often lost before the next; and like Sisyphus, the preacher is perpetually striving to lift the minds of his hearers above the level of worldliness, only to see them repeatedly falling from their temporary elevation, to profounder depths of indifference.

It was hoped that a week of Sabbaths, with an unusual concentration of labor, by laborers of different gifts, attended with special prayer for a divine energy, from many hearts stirred to an unusual fervor of desire and supplication, would instrumentally accomplish much more than the same amount of effort, spread out over many weeks, and having its impressions intermingled and diluted with a thousand secular influences.

The hope was not vain. The theory proved sound psychologically, while divine power

and grace, above all human philosophy and ability, saw fit to kindle the sacrifice thus laid upon the altar. Thousands will forever thank God for protracted meetings; and seldom perhaps has there been a richer combination of blessings than attended a succession of such gatherings, along the valleys and the hillsides of that charming region, during the summer of 1831.

The first was held at G——, in June. It was well attended, and was not without highly encouraging results, both immediate and permanent.

At its close, the pastor of the Hillside Church gave notice of a similar meeting to be held with his people, a few weeks later. All were invited to attend; and were exhorted to prayer and preparation. From that time onward, till its commencement, the meeting was spoken of, at home and abroad, with much interest, and anticipated, it is believed, with much fervent supplication, that God would direct and prosper it. Yet many

cautions were uttered, and much care taken, lest the means should be relied on unduly, and the power from on high be overlooked by Christians, and consequently be withheld by Him who will not give his glory unto another.

The time arrived; and with it came a great number of ministers and others, from considerable distances. It was comparatively a new thing. Many were anxious to judge for themselves, by this experiment, of the expediency of adopting the system.

Through the forethought and liberality of Mr. W., extensive preparations had been made to accommodate all who might choose to attend. Loads of hay had been deposited at the sheds which surrounded the church, that even the horses might not suffer; while provisions in large quantities were daily carried to a summer-house in the adjacent park, for the use of many, who, thus relieved from the necessity of returning home at noon, were

induced to continue their attendance through the day.

The invitation to partake of these refreshments was one day made the occasion of a most ingenious and thrilling appeal by our warm-hearted brother, Rev. Mr. L., who pressed upon the people with great earnestness and affection the invitations of Christ to poor sinners perishing with hunger and thirst, to partake of the bread and water of life, and all the rich provisions of his spiritual table, as they were about to receive a supply for other and less important necessities.

About thirty ministers were in attendance, comprising a great variety of gifts and attainments. There were the aged and the young; the doctrinal and the hortatory; the gravely solemn and the warmly impulsive. Men of different schools and different styles met here, and lent themselves willingly and without jealousy to the work.

The first day was very stormy, but from the clouds, which to our finite view were thus

hung around the enterprise, an unexpected light broke forth. Many farmers who had not intended to be present, and who would not have left their work at that busy season if it had been working weather, were induced to employ their leisure in visiting the distant sanctuary. Their interest, once awakened, could not be repressed by the attractions of their fields during the succeeding days of fine weather. They, with their families continued to attend, and found this a field which the Lord had blessed; the fruit of this labor remained, and will remain unto eternal life.

THE NIGHT WHEN CHRISTIANS COULD NOT SLEEP.

Two days of the meeting had passed away. Though the attendance was good, there was little apparent feeling. Yet some hearts were agonizing in prayer: and others were beginning to tremble with conviction. The evening services at the distant neighborhoods

were unusually solemn. A new spirit of grace and supplication was poured out upon God's people.

One brother in the church, unable to sleep, arose and went to the houses of two others, called them up, and spent with them the remainder of the night in fervent prayer. In the morning they called upon the pastor, that they might still further relieve their burdened hearts, and learn new tidings of the grace of God; tidings which soon poured in, both upon him and them, perhaps beyond their faith, certainly beyond his.

The godly mother of some awakened persons, an aged Baptist professor, arose in the night, and made her way to the dwelling of a near neighbor, an intimate friend and sister in Christ, to engage her supplications for those much loved souls. They soon rejoiced in gracious answers to those prayers.

When the ministers came together the next morning, the fruits of all those prayers were manifest. Not only had they received a new

baptism of the Holy Ghost, a new unction from on high, greatly adding to their fervency and effectiveness in the labors of the day, but many of them had some new thing to tell, of the grace of God in the families where they had been entertained, or in the respective neighborhoods.

From that memorable night, which might be called emphatically the night of prayer, was dated a new era in the progress of the work.

Oh! that there were more such nights! nights when Christians cannot sleep; not only during protracted meetings, but at other times. Such feelings on the part of the people, would be both a result and the procuring cause, of larger measures of the Spirit. Such morning visits from sleepless brethren, would cheer the hearts of the weary watchmen upon Zion's walls. The church would be seen giving heed to the inspired exhortation — "keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jeru-

saalem, a praise in the earth." When such nights come, the morning of Zion's joy and prosperity will not be long delayed.

PLAN OF THE MEETING.

Allusion has been made to the dispersion of the ministers in distant neighborhoods. This was quite necessary in the evenings, on account of the wide extremes from which the people came. Three, five, and even seven miles, were not uncommon distances to be traversed by regular attendants at the Hill-side church. A few families came even farther. To accommodate all our own people, and to afford opportunity, as far as possible, to those who might be induced to hear the gospel, if carried near to their own door, preaching-places were secured, in more than a dozen different neighborhoods. These were mostly, for reasons hereafter to be mentioned, private houses: and were supplied by brethren sent out in rotation, generally "two

and two," according to apostolic usage. They were entertained for the night, in the neighborhoods whither they went; and by their conversation and prayers in the families, as well as their plain and faithful appeals in the social meetings appointed for them, must be regarded as having largely contributed to the interest of the occasion, and, under God, to the extension of this work of grace.

Meetings for prayer were held before each public service; and the reports brought in from the outposts, especially the last two mornings, imparted a thrilling interest to those devotions. These, in turn, reacted upon the hearts of the worshippers. While they were yet speaking, God heard; so that when the preacher rose, he found the field white for the harvest, and the sharp sickle of divine truth reaped many sheaves. We began more distinctly to hear the kind command "open thy mouth *wide* that I may fill it." We expected great things. We did not ask, "have *any* been awakened?" but like the

churches in more ancient revivals, "*who* hath been wrought upon to-day?"

The tearful appeals and melting tenderness of Rev. Mr. L., now of P., N. Y., the terse simplicity and manly vigor of style and voice, which then as afterward marked Rev. Dr. T., now of P., Mass., and the massive strength and resistless momentum, long displayed through the pulpit and the press, by Rev. Dr. C., now of L., will never be forgotten by those who heard them. Especially will the closing sermon by the last named preacher, be long remembered. The text was, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink." The house was densely crowded; packed to its utmost capacity, from the pulpit stairs to the outer door; the meeting in the room below where it had been found necessary to hold a separate service, having on that occasion been given up, that all might unite in the closing exercises.

The silence was deep: the attention undiverted; the invitation of the Saviour came almost as a new voice from Heaven. It seemed indeed like the last day, not only of those appeals, but of all calls to repentance; and when according to the custom then adopted, — and there was no other public demonstration called for, — those who desired an interest in the prayers of God's people, were requested to rise, it was estimated that some three hundred, — more than a third of the number present, — stood up. Many hearts were bowed in humility; and of not a few already rejoicing in the answer to their own and other's prayers, it might be said by those who looked upon them, as of Stephen's face when he saw his Lord, "they were as it had been faces of angels."

Solemn farewells, and a hymn uttered with joy though interrupted by tears, closed this eventful period of four days; though many felt, like the disciples with the Saviour on the mount of transfiguration, that they should re-

joyce to have many tabernacles, and to dwell long upon that hillside, where Jesus had so manifestly been present.

RESULTS.

At the close of the meeting on Friday afternoon, the pastor remarked to his own flock, that they had been so mingled with friends from abroad, and his attention had been so much absorbed in the general arrangements of the meeting, that he hardly knew what blessings had descended upon them as a people, or how, in their scattered homes, to find and rejoice with, or counsel, those who might be most needing his pastoral care. He therefore invited them to return in the evening, and meet him for conversation and social worship in one of the reading rooms connected with the church. Notwithstanding the weariness consequent upon four day's incessant attendance, and the necessity of going several miles to their homes, for farm work, some seventy or eighty assem-

bled;— and such an inquiry meeting, few pastors have ever enjoyed. It reminded him of the lines :

“ Zion is like one that dreams,
Filled with wonder and delight.”

Passing along the seats with a word of inquiry and counsel for each, he was often stopped by some one, eager to communicate more fully the joyful experience of the few days past. “ Come,” said one, afterward an officer in the church, and now useful elsewhere,—his face glowing with radiant delight, both for himself and the group around, “ Come, sit down here, between me and my wife, and let us tell you what God has done for us both.”

It was indeed a place of rejoicing and of weeping. Tears of loving gratitude to the Saviour were abundant; and some souls were still laboring, tossed on the waves, not yet sheltered, as most of them were soon after, in the port of peace, the haven of the cross.

The church was much more than doubled, by this work of grace. Through the absorbing nature of the occasion, which drew together all who ever worshipped there, or were in any practical sense within the reach of pastoral influence from that quarter, few cases of awakening occurred immediately afterward. It was a quick, rich harvest. Many of the subjects of the work were not permanently resident in the neighborhood; and some few attached themselves to other evangelical denominations, which, without any stated preaching or regular organization, had begun to hold occasional meetings, in different parts of the several towns from which the B. church was gathered.

But there were other and still more extensive results of this protracted meeting. Not only the ministers, but many of their people, from neighboring towns, had flocked in, to see and enjoy this new experiment. The ministers were anxious to judge for themselves, as to the expediency of adopting

the plan among their own flocks; and many Christian parents and employers brought their families with them, that if a blessing should come, they might be ready to share it. Some, residing at distances of ten or fifteen miles, engaged lodgings for portions of their households, and made repeated journeys, in order that all their families and work people might in turn have the opportunity of hearing. One man offered to pay his workmen for their time, as if they had remained in the shop. Many of these families were richly blessed: in some cases nearly all the members of a household returned rejoicing in the Saviour, or earnestly seeking Him.

The pastors and church members found their hearts glowing, and were ready on the Sabbath following, to speak in public or in private, of the things they had seen and heard. The sacred impulse spread from heart to heart, and from church to church. In some cases, similar services were appointed; in others, different modes of effort were

adopted, by hearts glowing with love and zeal. Some ten or fifteen revivals of religion could be traced, more or less directly, to that protracted meeting. Even now, many eyes kindle, and many hearts beat quicker, at the mention of its thrilling scenes. Its fruit remains; some on earth, and some, we trust, in heaven.

Another class of results, rather immediate, it is hoped, than permanent, seem to demand attention, as essential to a just view of the scenes, of which a faint sketch has now been attempted.

It is not pleasant to speak or write of things unlovely and of evil report. But the sketch now undertaken would be imperfect, and the illustration of human nature, not to say the demonstration of the genuineness of the work, would be incomplete, without some farther allusion to the enmity so openly and so variously shown, towards the revival and the instruments in promoting it.

It can easily be imagined, that the whole

process of gathering a congregation on the hillside, would be viewed with disfavor, by those who were satisfied with the existing order of things; and against whose religious views and practice, the new church, even if its members had been entirely silent, was a standing protest.

Nor was it strange, that in proportion to the activity and zeal exhibited by the infant church in seeking to propagate their views, and to the success attending their exertions, dislike should become intensified into enmity, and hard thoughts be expressed in bitter words, or still more palpable demonstrations.

Such was indeed the fact. If wives were not locked up by infuriated husbands, to prevent them from attending meeting, as in some places not far distant; and if the lives of evening worshippers were not often endangered by the cutting of harnesses and the removal of lynch-pins, yet the Hillside church did not wholly escape the angry speeches and rude actions of their neighbors.

Some expressed the hope, that lightning might consume the house. Another, when a request was made for the use of a district school house for a lecture, protested that he would lose his last drop of blood first.

Mobs waylaid us on the road, and puffed tobacco smoke and curses into the windows of the houses where we met to pray; while others, claiming higher respectability, not openly appearing in those more vulgar demonstrations, united in sending an insulting letter, to one, whose only fault was a sincere desire for their good, combined with great plainness of speech in expressing that desire, and abundant pecuniary means to carry out his plans of usefulness.

This communication was addressed to the principal projector and sustainer of the new church; and it concluded with the following sentences:

"We pity your ignorance, so far as that directs your zeal; but we fear something worse than ignorance guides your operations

against the peace and harmony of this town. We look upon the course you are pursuing towards the inhabitants of this place, as insulting in the highest degree; and if we were to form an opinion from your conduct, we should think you a fit person to inhabit a madhouse or a workhouse. In short, we view your character and conduct as disgraceful to any person professing decency and common sense; and we shall hail your departure from this section of the country, as a blessing to the people, which we hope may long be continued to them."

This remarkable specimen of courtesy and liberality was sent to one whose sole offence was, that he had provided a new place of worship for any who might choose to attend it, and was always ready to give reasons for his faith, and for his course in relation thereto.

Its thunder was harmless. No lightning could go with it, to blast and destroy. But if the survivors of that band of forty-two,

some of whom are temperate, respectable and even religious men, should read the document, its allusions to the "madhouse" and the "workhouse" might, in connexion with the history of some of their associates, be, to say the least, startling.

It would be well for all the enemies of any religious movement, which has any marks of sincerity and of genuineness, to remember the counsel of Gamaliel to the Jews concerning the apostles: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

The following extract from a letter written by a ministering brother, presents some additional views of the scenes connected with the protracted meeting.

"Your letter, dear brother C., received yesterday, touched a tender chord, and woke up pleasant memories, in my soul; memories

of God's power and glory in the sanctuary at B——.

“When the Lord shall build up Zion, He will appear in His glory. I thought, at once of that precious fast day, which preceded the day of God's power, when the church rent their hearts, and not their garments. I thought of the next day; when from every point of compass, the tribes of the Lord came up with their pastors; and the solemn preaching of that day, to a valley full of bones, and very dry, in which, all the day long, there was no shaking, no noise of bone coming to its bone, nor covering of sinews and flesh; and how, with sad hearts, we separated to the different districts, to hold prayer meetings.

“Never shall I forget the meeting, that evening, in your own vestry room; and the agony of soul we felt at the thought that if the Spirit did not descend and vindicate the faithfulness of God to His promises, and the claims of Christ to the Godhead, the enemies

of Christ and revivals would triumph. That thought was the burden of our Zion that night.

“And have you forgotten, dear brother, how when these things were presented to the church, all our hearts were broken, and our attempts to pray and sing were counteracted by our deep emotion! How awful was that place, my brother; that Bethel, the house of God, the gate of Heaven! I forget names, but I remember those dear brethren.

“The next morning, when we assembled, similar reports were brought from the other districts; and lo, what a change! Who preached? I believe brother S., an old friend of Mr. Nettleton; and I followed. Then Mr. P., of L., fell before the sword of the Spirit; and the whole choir from B.

“That rush into the inquiry meeting! what a Bochim! Then our Jesus rode forth, and his arrows were sharp in the hearts of the King’s enemies, whereby the people fell under Him.

“How that work spread into the adjacent towns, you well know, and you know, too, what a spirit was aroused. Never have I seen since, such displays of Satanic wrath, as when Mr. W. and myself went to attend a meeting, somewhere, and the baser sort met us with the whoops of Indians, the clatter of tin pans, and blasphemies, and surrounded the house where the congregation was assembled; cursing and swearing. They furnished me with a text: Luke 14: 28; and I cared very little whether they shot me or not.

“Then, brother, we went to L. and saw the wonders of the Lord. Have you forgotten how the cannon was brought out at the close of the meeting, and a salute fired as of a fiendish jubilee?

“My spirit is refreshed by writing to you, my brother. Where is that great assembly then gathered in your beautiful sanctuary?

Many, I doubt not, are in heaven. May we be prepared to meet them.

“Truly yours,

“H. G. L.”

“P—, N. Y., March 8, 1855.”

Here must end our published reminiscences of that protracted meeting. The precious memories of it that can never on earth be gathered up, will doubtless enhance the joys of heaven, to many who witnessed its scenes. Oh, that it might be so with all. And may every reader of these pages be prepared for those higher services which shall be joyfully protracted through ages without end.

WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE ON CHRIST?

It seems due to the honor of divine truth, and of God's gracious providence, sometimes to record instances of usefulness, resulting from the feeblest attempts to enforce the teachings of the Bible.

It is quite natural, and, as all pastors can testify, very common, for persons who begin to feel the pressure of the Gospel command: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" to inquire, what it is to do this, and how it can be done.

The pastor at the hillside prepared the plan of an unwritten sermon, designed to meet these cases; and to answer, as simply

and scripturally as possible, the oft-repeated question: What is it to believe on Christ?

It was delivered in substance many times, especially at the protracted meetings of that day. And having been blessed as an instrument in bringing some souls out of darkness into the light and joy of faith, it was thrown into the form of a tract, and has been published by the American Tract Society, and other bodies, in various languages.

The design of this little messenger was, simply to echo the word of God, concerning the faith which is unto salvation. And He who chooses things that are despised, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence, has graciously owned the endeavor.

The history of the press, as connected with usefulness to the souls of men, is such as should greatly encourage ministers and laymen too, to gather up, as one has said, for further use, those thoughts or facts, which

the Holy Ghost has already employed as arrows to reach men's hearts.

These may be flying when we shall be sleeping. "Armed with the Spirit's power," they may honor God and bless men.

One instance of this kind, is connected with the origin of the present publication. It claims a record here, as illustrating what an ancient New England divine calls, the wonder-working providence of God.

Some months since, a member of a country church wrote a letter, suggesting the desirableness of my preparing for the press, such records of facts, conversations, and trains of thought, as other pastors had sent forth with the most happy results.

For some time the letter was not answered; though the suggestion was not forgotten, and it contributed to mature a purpose partly formed before.

When this purpose became definite, it was thought proper to acknowledge the receipt of the letter. With the reply there was en-

closed, as a matter of courtesy, a copy of the tract already mentioned. A few weeks after, the following answer was received:

" ———, Oct. 6, 1854.

" REV. AND DEAR SIR:

" It will perhaps be interesting to you to know what became of the little tract you sent me.

" About four weeks before it came, my nearest neighbor had a son, almost twenty-three years of age, come home to die, with consumption. He had been religiously educated; but had married a professed Universalist, and very much wished to be one himself. They had brought a Universalist book with them as a shield; and the young man rather resented all that was said to him on religious subjects. Many prayers were offered for him; and much anxiety was felt on his account.

" The next night after I received your letter, I walked out between nine and ten o'clock.

I soon discovered the form of a man through the darkness, and was accosted by the well-known voice of my neighbor, inquiring if I had the tract you had sent me. He said he had owned it, but after searching the house all over, could not find it; adding that he wished it to read to his son.

"I got it for him, and, as he afterwards told me, he went into his barn, held it in his hand, and prayed for a blessing upon it, almost in an agony of mind. He then went to his son's bedside, and told him he had a tract, which came rather providentially, and wished him to hear it. The son said, in an angry tone: "Where did you get it? Up at —'s, didn't you? I wish you would let me alone, or stay out of my room.'

"This, my neighbor said, was like a bolt from heaven. It seemed to destroy his last hope. He went out without another word. Some ten or fifteen minutes after, the son sent his wife out, to learn why his father left so abruptly. But he gave her no answer.

"Next morning the son sent out for the tract, and requested his wife to read it to him. This request was several times repeated. After speaking in that manner to his father, and seeing his distress, he had felt that he had done wrong, and had sinned against God. He sent for his father and asked his forgiveness. But that would not do. He had SINNED; and there it rested on his conscience, as he had never felt it before. All his bitter feelings against his father, and other Christian friends, came up in his thoughts, as so many witnesses against him.

"He said he was ashamed to pray; and it was some time before he tried. At length his distress compelled him to make the attempt. This distress was not occasioned by the fear of death, as near; but by a sense of sin, as against God. The unkind speech to his father, seemed to open his eyes to all the rest of his transgressions.

"After a few days he appeared to rest on the promises; and said his soul was calm,

and his sleep sweet. Said he to me: 'I have heard about *a great, a free, a FULL salvation*; but I never saw it before.' He had not hitherto felt that God could justly punish a sinner forever; but now it seemed to him that He could not be just, unless He did so punish those sinners who reject the Gospel. His feelings did seem to be scriptural; and doubtless the tract, which was so often read by his request, was providentially sent within his reach.

"The morning of his death, I saw him.

" 'I have but little strength,' said he, 'and wish to talk a little. I have had a hard night, (most truly he had) and feel much distress now; but it does seem to me, that I have had a view of heaven last night, and I long to be there.'

" 'And now,' said he to me, 'would it be proper for me to pray that God would take me away.'

"I told him he could stay but a short time, and he had better pray for patience; and he seemed satisfied.

"Just before he died, and after his sight failed, there was such a smile on his features, that all noticed it. His wife inquired what so pleased him.

"'Oh!' said he, 'I see the Saviour, and a bright heaven; and now let me go, let me go, bury me, bury me.' These were the last words he uttered.

"His wife says, that from what she saw in him, she believes there is a reality in religion, and has begged the tract, to carry home with her. Her husband most thoroughly renounced his Universalist sentiments; saying that he had never had much confidence in them.

"I have given but a hasty outline of this pleasing occurrence. It is an interesting scene to look back upon; and though no one of us can claim to be *the* instrument, yet it is grateful to the feelings to think we may have borne a humble part in accomplishing so great a good.

"Yours truly,

"_____."

Little need be added to this plain statement of facts, illustrating several obvious points of divine truth and human duty.

It certainly deserves to be pondered by all Christians, in whatever sphere, who appreciate the blessedness of "converting a sinner from the error of his ways."

There are many allowable applications of that scriptural phrase; always, of course, to be understood in consistency with the most entire dependence on divine grace.

But though it is only as a humble instrument, most undeserving of the honor, that either minister or layman can be useful, either by preaching or conversation, by writing tracts or distributing them, yet such an instrumentality is not to be neglected by any who desire to serve God and their generation.

Has any reader of these pages been interested in the touching narrative just given? Does any one desire himself to find the way of peace, and to be pardoned through the blood of the everlasting Covenant?

In the hope that the tract alluded to, may prove, in this connexion, a word in season, and with the prayer that the Holy Spirit may render it effectual unto salvation, it is here subjoined.

WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE ON CHRIST?

READER, did you ever ask this question? Is it your sincere and earnest wish to have it answered? If so, this tract is intended *for you*. May God make it a blessing to your soul.

I will suppose that you have at some time felt alarmed in view of your sins, and inquired in your thoughts, if not in words, "What must I do to be saved?" You have the same answer that Paul gave to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Still you hesitate. You ask what this language means. You desire to know *what it is* to believe on Christ.

Your wish, fellow sinner, is a very reasonable one. The wonder and the sin is, that you

have not asked such a question before. It is a most important and solemn question. It has much to do with your salvation; for the BIBLE declares, "He that believeth on the SON hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the SON, shall not see life; but *the wrath of God abideth on him.*"

"*What is it to believe on Christ?*" It is,

TO FEEL YOUR NEED OF HIM;

TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS ABLE AND WILLING TO SAVE YOU, AND TO SAVE YOU NOW; and

TO CAST YOURSELF UNRESERVEDLY ON HIS MERCY and TRUST IN HIM ALONE FOR SALVATION.

To feel your need of Him. Till you do this, you will never seek him earnestly, or trust him wholly. You do not send for a physician till you feel yourself to be ill. It was only when Peter found he was beginning to sink, that he cried, "Lord save me!" So the sinner never goes to Christ in a right manner, till he feels himself to be a lost,

wretched being. It is not enough to *know* this: you must *feel* it.

Do you say *you cannot*? O, then, *how* lost, *how* wretched you must be! Your very language ought to fill you with shame and fear. Whose fault is it that you do not feel? How long need it be before you feel? You can feel *alarm* when a murderer holds you in his grasp; you can feel *sorrow* when a friend is dying in agony before your eyes; and can you feel no sorrow when you think of a suffering Saviour, whose love you have abused? no alarm when you call to mind that fearful judgment to which you are hastening? Will you dare tell your Judge, at the great day, that you could not feel your need of a Saviour?

But you say, "I *do* feel, at least in some degree, that I am a poor, guilty, undone sinner; but this will not save me." *No, it will not.* Thousands have felt this and perished. You must also,

Believe that Christ is able and willing to

save you, and to save you NOW. He is able, for he is almighty. You are a great sinner, but Christ is a great Saviour. Satan has been trying to persuade you that Christ is not able to save so great a sinner as you are. It is false. He *is* able, and unless you *believe this* in all its glorious extent, you will no more be willing to trust him, than a man on the roof of a burning house will step upon a weak ladder which he knows will give way beneath him.

You must believe that he is *willing*. He has in many ways shown himself to be willing. If you doubt it, you disbelieve and offend him. Does it please him, think you, when he utters this kind welcome, "WHOSOEVER cometh unto me, *I will in nowise cast out,*" to hear you reply, "O Lord, I cannot think that thou wouldst receive such an one as me, if I *should* come?" Yet you do in effect say this every moment you cherish the feeling that you are too sinful to hope for pardon. You mistake this for humility, but it is unbelief, and sin.

You must believe that he is willing *now*. Perhaps you have thought he *would* be willing, after a few more days or weeks spent in praying, and weeping, and growing better. Be assured your worst enemy wants no more than that you should continue to think so. *You are growing no better.* You are doing nothing to gain Christ's favor while you refuse to yield to his invitations. Until you believe that he is able and willing to save you, and to do it now, you never will be saved. The great enemy of your soul does not wish you to set a time *far distant* when you can go to Christ, and when he will be willing to receive you. If you will *continue* to place that time at the distance of a week, or an hour, or a minute, his object is gained, and your soul is lost.

But you ask, "Does not a sinner, at the moment of his actual submission to the Saviour, feel more fit to be pardoned; and is not Christ more willing to pardon him than ever before?" No, dear friend, No! He

was *less* fit to be pardoned, for his sins had been increasing every moment up to that very time; and Christ was no more *willing* to pardon him than he had always been. Every Christian will tell you that, so far as Christ's willingness was concerned, he might as well have found peace in him months or years sooner, as when he hopes he *was* pardoned. The next thing required of you is,

To cast yourself unreservedly upon his mercy, and trust in him alone for salvation. This implies that you renounce all expectation of saving yourself, or of being saved any other way than through the righteousness and redemption of Christ. Did you ever feel as if you had done all you could? Have you tried to think of something more to do to obtain hope and forgiveness? You have done *too much* in this way already.

Just stop doing, and begin to trust Christ to do all, and you are safe. A man is rowing a boat on a river, just above a dreadful

cataract. The current begins to bear him downward, the spectators on the banks give him up for lost. "He is gone!" they all exclaim. But in another moment a rope is thrown towards the wretched man, it strikes the water near the boat; *now* how does the case stand? Do all the spectators call upon him to *row*, to *row stronger*, to *try harder* to reach the shore, when with every stroke of his arm the boat is evidently floating toward the falls? O no, their eager and united cry is, "*Drop your oars! Give up your desperate attempt! TAKE HOLD OF THE ROPE!*" But he chooses to row, and in a few minutes he disappears and perishes. All his hope lay, not in rowing, but in *ceasing* to row; for while he was rowing he could not grasp the rope. So all the sinner's hope lies not in struggling to save himself, but in *ceasing* to struggle; for while he expects soon to accomplish the work of salvation, he will not look to Christ to do it for him. It is not *doing* but *yielding* that is required. •

But you say, "If all I have to do is to cease from attempting to save myself, and to be willing that Christ should do the work of my salvation, why do you urge me to *become a Christian*, or to do *any thing*? Why not let me sit still, and wait till Christ shall come and pardon me?" And what if the man in the boat had dropped his oar, and then folded his hands and waited for the rope to save him? He might as well have died rowing as sitting still; and would as *certainly* have died in the latter case as in the former. But he must *grasp the rope*. So the sinner must *lay hold upon the cross*; not by waiting till he is better, but by first concluding that he shall never be any better in the way he is going on, and then *looking to Christ*. As he perceives the ground sinking beneath him, and feels how lost and wretched he is, filled with mingled despair and hope—despair in himself, and

hope in the power and mercy of Christ — he says,

“I stand upon a mountain’s edge,
O save me, lest I fall!”

His prayer is heard — the heart of the compassionate Saviour is ready to welcome him — the arms of mercy are stretched out to receive him — a word of kind welcome reaches his ear, “*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*” He believes that word — he trusts that heart — he falls into those arms, *and he is safe.*

Now, dear reader, your question is answered. Is not the answer true? Is it not *plain*? Do you not see your mistake? Since all things are now ready, and the Holy Spirit not quite grieved away from your heart by your delay, will you wait any longer?

Does your heart now say, “Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief?” Will you take the Saviour *at his word*? Are you willing to

trust him to do *the whole work* of your salvation?

If so, lay down this tract; prostrate yourself before this waiting, insulted, and still compassionate Redeemer; tell him all your heart, and he will pardon, accept, and save you.

PROMPT DECISION.

Every pastor must have seen, with grief and anxiety, the loitering habit of the heart, even when somewhat inclined, by divine grace and its own perceived necessities, to enter the narrow way by the side of the cross.

In many cases, where sin has been clearly perceived and deeply felt, and an apparent penitence developed, there is a strange holding back of the heart from the Saviour. He demands no other fitness in that heart, in order to its being given and accepted, but that it should be penitently and trustingly offered.

“ All the fitness He requireth,
Is, to feel your need of Him.”

To meet and overcome this difficulty, this enemy of the soul, various means must be used in different cases, by pastors and other spiritual advisers. Among these may be mentioned, counselling the awakened person to go by himself, in the solitude of his chamber, and resolve not to leave the place till he has submitted to Christ.

An instance of this kind is recollected, in which a long and painful struggle was most happily terminated.

A young lady had been for some time convinced of sin, and deeply anxious to find the way of salvation. She well knew the work of Christ; and understood the theory of pardon through His atoning blood. She thought herself willing to forsake all and follow Him; and had tried to say from the heart: "Here, Lord, I give myself away."

Still the wheels of the chariot of salvation seemed to linger in their course. Doubtless the fault was her own; and yet, with the feeling on her part, that she could do nothing more, she still walked in darkness.

This state of things was becoming—so to speak—*chronic*; a most troublesome and often dangerous form of disease, spiritual as well as physical.

After exhausting, one day, as often before, the usual arguments and appeals on the duty of yielding unconditionally to the Saviour, I ventured to enjoin it upon her, *to make that day, the day of decision*; to retire to her room with the fixed determination not to leave it with a heart still withheld from Christ.

This she did. The result was most happy. She had been deferring the decisive act, from day to day, under the impression that in some respects the proper time had not come. She now felt, that she had arrived at a crisis in her history and destiny.

This crisis was indeed, partly of her own making. And yet it was so brought about, through God's providence in causing the matter to be presented in this form before her, that she felt constrained to accept the issue.

She was compelled to decide, then to serve the Lord, or pass the fearful peril of an indefinite and perhaps final postponement of a right decision.

When she next met her pastor, with a beaming countenance she avowed her cheerful trust in Christ, and her purpose to serve Him.

She expressed wonder and regret, that she had so long delayed coming to Him, even after the Spirit had convinced her of her need, and had shown her something of His attractiveness and sufficiency, as a Saviour.

Sometimes, even a more prompt decision has been made, without those long preliminary processes, of hesitation and delay, which we have almost come to consider, however unscripturally, as essential to thoroughness of religious experience.

“The valley of humiliation,” once said a father in the church, “is broad and deep; but too many make, of their repentance, only a plunge in, and a plunge out again.” This was

a striking remark; and one not wholly without occasion. And yet it is rather the depth, than the breadth, of this valley of humiliation, this river of repentance, that is important, before climbing up the bank where the Cross stands to comfort the heart-broken but believing sinner. His repentance should never cease; but his FAITH should begin, as soon as his conviction. Such was, long ago, the experience of one man, who was present at a late meeting of the Conference, to which the Hillside church formerly belonged.

He attended meeting one Sabbath, some twenty-four years since, where the Hillside pastor preached on exchange. His mind was in a state of profound indifference as to religion; except that he had imbibed Universalist opinions, and did not believe in the necessity of any kind or degree of piety, in order to salvation.

Neither the text nor the sermon, so far as now recollected, had any special bearing upon that subject. Nor were they of a peculiarly

awakening character; yet God's word, and His truth deduced from it, were by the Spirit made quick and powerful.

During the first part of the discourse, the mind of this hearer was occupied with a comparison between that strain of preaching and the one to which he was accustomed. His mind was busy in imagining, what might have been expected from a Universalist preacher, discussing the same subject.

These thoughts were interrupted by a deep sense of personal sinfulness; and this, in turn, led him to an instant acceptance of the Saviour; whose work and offers of mercy should not be left out of sight, in any sermon.

He went down to his house, justified. At least so he supposed; and with whatever doubt so sudden a conversion might naturally have been regarded, *this* has stood the test of nearly a quarter of a century's experience. The subject of it is an active and consistent member of the church, which he originally joined.

How prompt his decision ! Was it too much so ?

Look at it. This man had believed another gospel : He had received the "tidings," which are not "good" because not true, first brought to Eve by the serpent : "ye shall not surely die."

He now heard the true gospel ; at first, he cavilled. Then, he compared. Then, he began to apply the truth ; to feel it ; to love it. Why should he not at once obey it ? He did so. Christ said to him, as to the woman of Samaria, "I that speak unto thee am He," that can forgive thy sins and save thy soul. Believe, love, and obey ; and all shall be well.

Why should he delay ? Why not as he did, make haste to keep the commandments ?

Why should not others, like the Philippian jailer, believe on the Lord Jesus in the same hour that they feel their need, and hear His gracious but imperative invitation ?

A case of sudden and remarkable awaken-

ing, and of an equally rapid process of reflection and decision, came under my notice while attending one of a series of protracted meetings held in several neighboring towns after the one at B., already described.

A man was engaged, with others, to do some carpenter's work in the village of L. Going early in the morning to his place of labor, he was called to breakfast with the family.

Finding a large circle assembled at the table, he occupied himself, during the asking of a blessing, by looking around upon the company; and was forcibly struck, by observing that every individual, excepting himself, was a professor of religion.

He felt himself alone. He only, of all that number, had no part nor lot in the religion of Christ; no heart to thank God in the morning prayer; no desire for His blessing on the morning meal.

The thought was like an arrow from the quiver of the Almighty. It pierced his soul

through, with many sorrows. Alarm and grief by turns agitated him. It was with difficulty that he could preserve an outward composure at the table, and go out with the other workmen to his labor.

Soon, his feelings became uncontrollable. He left his work, and hurried home. Knowing by some means, that a protracted meeting was in progress, in a town several miles distant, he went thither with his wife.

We were about to close an evening meeting, in a school house in a remote part of that town, when we were startled by the entrance of two persons, evidently under the influence of some powerful excitement. Their emotion was so visibly deep, as to attract general attention; and it added to the already intense feeling, which pervaded the assembly.

Though the discourse was nearly closed before their entrance, yet a divergence was made, from the regular course of remark, that the outline and application of gospel

truth might be distinctly and earnestly presented to these minds, whose particular state and necessities could only be conjectured.

The meeting was dismissed. An opportunity was then sought for a full and free conversation. The wife sympathized deeply with her husband's strong and sudden emotions; and was herself evidently convinced by the Holy Ghost, of her own sinfulness, and spiritual necessities.

They retired, with such counsel as seemed appropriate. They were especially entreated to let their surrender to Christ be as prompt, as had been their awakening at the call of the Spirit. Both, it is believed, found comfort that very night.

The next morning, no longer "alone" among the people of God, but having one heart with each other, and with all true disciples, they were living witnesses that the long interval between conviction and conversion is not a prescribed and inevitable arrangement, in the plan of salvation.

How right, how safe, and with divine aid sought and obtained, how easy, when God says "seek my face," to reply; "Thy face, Lord, will I seek;" — to make haste and delay not, to keep His commandments.

A case of prompt decision as to seeking the blessings of true piety, though not, in that instance, attended with immediate comfort, occurred in connexion with a bible class exercise, long held in different parts of the wide field at and around B. Are not such exercises too much going out of use in these days? There were formerly, many little circles gathered around centre tables, or kitchen tables, in our land, for the familiar study of God's word, every member of which has grown up a well instructed disciple. They are now, either living to do good, or called up higher, where they can study the divine character, without the medium of the printed page.

Mr. S. had somewhat reluctantly consented to his wife's going, without him, in the com-

pany of a lady, to such a weekly service. Professing to regard it as unsafe for them to ride alone, but perhaps beginning to feel the force of other motives, he resolved to accompany her. His active mind was soon arrested by themes so lofty. His proud, impulsive heart was touched by truths so impressive as those the gospel involves.

Soon after this, a project was formed, for a scene of merrymaking; such an one as Mr. S. had always been foremost in planning and promoting.

To the surprise of all those who sought his coöperation, he declined, on the plea of an engagement, and soon explained, that it was the bible class which claimed his attention.

This they thought one of the best of jokes; and burst into loud merriment; asking how long it was, since he had turned to be religious.

But with characteristic originality of expression, as well as decision of purpose, he said:

"I will tell you what it is, my friends; I have found out that I have a soul to be saved; and I am going to save it, if there is any such thing."

This was, at least sufficiently "prompt," to relieve him from their importunities; and though it was in another place, and at a later period, that he came out an avowed and happy disciple of Christ, yet we may suppose that a purpose was then formed, which God graciously accepted and caused in due time to be perceptibly accomplished.

One other case, though occurring in another field, must not be passed by.

A young woman, employed as a singer in a choir, was induced one evening, by peculiar circumstances, to attend a Sabbath evening meeting in behalf of seamen.

A letter was read from the Sailor's Magazine, written by a pious young woman to her sailor brother in a hospital. It was touching indeed; full of sisterly love, and of the deepest yearning of a true Christian heart. But

it did that brother no good. He was dead before it reached his ward.

Still, it had its errand. Miss D. had a brother, not a sailor, but far away. She tenderly loved him. The thought at once arose in her mind; "If my brother should be ill, I could not write him such a letter." Her heart felt the sting of this conclusion, and she found no rest till she found Christ.

This was, I think, that very night. When she first called upon her pastor, which was early in the same week, her heart was resting on Christ. On Him it has been stayed ever since; even when, far from other friends, she was called upon to lay that only brother in a stranger's grave.

Another case is recollected among the little flock at B., in which a prompt decision was made at last, though after long delay.

The young lady referred to, had been for some time convinced of sin, and almost persuaded to accept the offered Saviour. But under one plea or another, such as unfitness,

want of feeling, and the like, she had delayed the act of faith so long, that there was danger of her subsiding into a state of mingled despair and indifference. Many such there are, needing a fresh and more powerful awakening, to overcome the soporific tendencies of this process.

Visiting her one day, I found her in the same state; her countenance gloomy with the shadows of remorse and unbelief. A single question and answer revealed, if that had been necessary, the condition of things in her heart.

She was then addressed nearly in the following words:

“Miss F., I must leave you; leave you to settle this matter with your God and Saviour. I have often told you of Christ’s willingness to accept and save you, the moment you will cast yourself unreservedly upon His mercy,—I have pointed you to His own kind assurances to this effect. As you have not believed HIM, I can hardly expect that you will believe *me*, whatever I may say. Good morning.”

The pastor left her, but the Good Shepherd remained with her; forgave her long distrust; and by His Spirit gently drew her heart, to a believing compliance with His invitation.

She saw that unbelief, that is, *not putting confidence in the Saviour's own words*, had been the sinful cause of her walking so long in darkness. She saw, and mourned; she repented, and turned to the Lord. She trusted and was not disappointed.

The Hillside pastor, attending a protracted meeting in the town of P., was visited at his lodgings, late in the evening, by an elderly man, with whom he had exchanged a few words, at the crowded inquiry meeting previously held.

Mr. B. had grown old in sin. The force of evil habits, combining with the ordinary obstacles presented by the unbelieving heart, made it difficult for him to begin the Christian life, though convinced of his need of a Saviour.

It was suggested to him, that he should, on going to his house, put his new purposes in writing, drawing up a short covenant between his soul and God, and then, with prayer and full purpose of heart, should sign it on his knees.

The next morning, at an early hour, he came in; showed the paper he had drawn up; and expressed the firm and cheerful hope that he should, by divine grace, be enabled at length to overcome his besetting sins, to lead a godly life, trusting in the righteousness of Christ for pardon and salvation.

This he did; never failing to allude afterward, as opportunity offered, to that night as a night of decision.

Similar recitals might be multiplied, from every pastor's recollection. And numerous, alas! it is to be feared, are cases of an opposite class: in which the right decision is so long delayed, that a wrong one is finally made: a decision not prompt and definite,

but none the less fatal, because gradually and unconsciously formed.

Reader! is any one of the cases now mentioned, the counterpart of your own? If so, let the result be the same, and that without delay, lest the right decision, longer postponed, should never be made.

JOY FOUND IN OBEDIENCE.

Not unfrequently, after repentance and some little measure of faith seem to have been exercised, there is a delay of comfort. The "joy of faith" is not felt, even when the soul, clinging with a slender grasp to the Cross, finds a partial relief from its fears and sorrows.

This is sometimes owing to defective views of duty. The conscience not fully enlightened, either ignores some plain command of the Bible, or else perplexes the heart, by urging as a duty, some unrequired act or sacrifice.

Of the latter description was the case of a young man, much devoted to mental improvement. He was led to look up to the Father

of Spirits, and feeling that he had not glorified Him, in the use either of his bodily or his mental endowments, endeavored, relying on the atonement and intercession of Christ, to give himself up to his Creator and Redeemer.

But in some way he had conceived the notion that a Christian must read no books except the Bible. He was unable to come to a resolution, in reality so unrequired, and, at the same time, so contrary to his tastes and purposes in life, as the total abandonment of all secular reading. For a long time he walked in darkness. To him it was sin to read, while his weak conscience remained thus perverted.

He could find no joy but in obedience; and it was not until his mind was enlightened as to what were the real demands of duty, that he found peace.

More frequently, however, the supposed duty is really such. Then joy, long delayed, comes at length from obedience; and not from

the discovery that the particular act, or relinquishment is not required.

Family prayer is often the point, in the pathway of Christian duty, at which the footsteps of the pilgrim are for a time arrested. A man with a household under his care, has reason to judge that his duty, as a disciple of Christ, cannot be all performed until he has established a family altar, and commenced the habit of calling around it, for thanksgiving and prayer, those who dwell with him.

Yet it is, on many accounts, a difficult duty to commence. It involves a certain degree of committal. It leads to the natural, and often very sincere and earnest inquiry: "Shall I have strength to persevere, and to fulfil the expectations, as to my leading a Christian life, which such a step will awaken in the minds of the friends or the enemies of religion? Shall I not disappoint the first and encourage the others?"

There is natural timidity, too; a lack of facility in utterance; and more than all, that

strange element of our social nature, which makes all religious communication less easy with intimate friends than with strangers. All these combine to keep back many from this duty, who almost hope they have entered the narrow way. Its first performance is often the signal for new joy, like a new sun, to arise upon the soul.

Such, in both respects, was the case of Mr. L., of B. He was the father of a very numerous family. The elder of his children, as well as his wife, already rejoiced in the Saviour. Even the younger sons and daughters, down to a very tender age, were beginning, at a time of general interest, to seek the children's Friend.

Mr. L. was deeply moved; and seemed not far from the kingdom of God. But something kept him back; and it was urged upon him, one evening, to go home and perform the duty of family prayer; the only one which he felt any hesitation about undertaking.

He accordingly called his family together.

A portion of God's word was read, and the family kneeled for prayer. But no words came. At length the mother prayed, either of her own accord, or at some intimation from her embarrassed husband. Then, after a pause, followed one and another of the sons and daughters, till five or six prayers had been offered.

At length that manly heart found utterance. Its fullness was relieved by a few words, hardly more than these, "Lord teach me to pray!"

It was enough. The charm was broken. After that, prayer was no longer a task. With obedience came joy. And that happy circle, though scattered, still remember with pleasure, the time of their first family devotions.

Another instance, somewhat similar, occurred in the religious history of Mr. L., residing in another place.

Finding him at a meeting for conversation on a Sabbath evening, apparently stumbling

at this same stumbling stone, I begged him to go home and begin the performance of that duty; for such he acknowledged, and evidently felt it to be.

His occupation as a stage driver, prevented my seeing him again till the next Sabbath evening. He then met me with joyful looks which told me in part the story of his altered feelings. They were soon more fully expressed in glowing words, nearly as follows: .

“I went home, thinking much on what you had said. I hardly thought that the hindrance in my way was what you supposed. But I resolved to make the experiment, determined that I would not lose my soul, nor continue disobedient to God, if such an effort could prevent.

“When I reached home, my wife and daughter had retired for the night; and Satan told me that I could not pray in my family then.

“But I was not to be put off so. After reading several chapters in the Bible, before I

felt courage enough, I entered the bedroom and asked my wife if I should pray with her.

"She at once assented. I kneeled down, *and the moment my knees touched the floor, my heart burst!*"

This was the end of his darkness. When he made haste and delayed no longer to keep God's commandments, the time of joy arrived.

One duty performed prepares the way for another; and I had the happiness to hear him say, in reply to a word of exhortation as to Christian faithfulness towards passengers, who, as I told him, might be more affected by what he should say than by a sermon: "Oh, yes, I have tried that; and the tears rolled down their cheeks, to hear a stage-driver talking to them about their souls."

Should any head of a family read these pages, who is without comfort, endeavoring to serve God, and yet deferring this branch of service, let him ask himself if here is not the secret of his unhappiness.

Such a neglect, like the little *remora* of ancient fable, which was said to seize upon the keel of the largest ship, and stop its passage through the water, may effectually hinder the soul in her passage toward the port of peace.

The first thing recorded in the history of many revivals of religion, is the erection of family altars. Is not this done, in many cases, by those who have long been not far from the kingdom of God, but who enter those blessed portals, only when they are "willing and obedient?"

He that doeth God's will, shall know His truth and enjoy His smile.

COURAGE TO JOIN THE CHURCH.

This, as well as the step mentioned in the last sketch, sometimes appears to be the only thing wanting. There is faith, at least like a grain of mustard seed; a trembling hope; unquestionable penitence; a desire to do right; and yet such a fear of doing wrong instead, that this most important duty is deferred.

Thus the man lives, and perhaps dies, in darkness, when the children's bread, and the cup of blessing, which is the communion of the blood of Christ, might have proved like the honey which enlightened the eyes of the ancient Jewish warrior, dimmed with the weariness of fighting and pursuing.

There is a self-distrust, which amounts to

spiritual cowardice; a self-distrust, if not excessive, as in one sense no self-distrust can be, yet distorted, and not regulated and balanced, as it should be, by trust in Christ, and by the pressure of duty to Him. These should lead the doubting disciple to attempt great things, and to expect success, through that grace which is made perfect in human weakness.

This had, for two years or more, been the case with Mr. H. His wife, with other friends, had already publicly professed faith in Christ, and enjoyed the advantages of Christian fellowship and communion. But though his religious convictions and hopes bore the same date with those of his wife, and had never been abandoned, he had not found courage for the solemn step which she and other friends, after waiting some time for him, had felt it their duty, and found it their joy, to take.

It is doubtless best, in ordinary cases, not to urge individuals upon this point, lest they

should afterwards regret their haste - and cause the church to regret it. I have preferred to present even the most general views of this Christian duty and privilege, in public addresses rather than privately; leaving each person to apply those principles, and to judge freely for himself. But this was one of the few instances in which it seemed a duty to make a personal appeal. This was done in substance as follows:

“Mr. H., it is now two years, since you endeavored to give your heart to Christ. The hope you then cherished, has not been wholly abandoned.

“Religious duties, I know, you do not wholly neglect. And yet while your wife, your brother, and other dear friends who found the Saviour at the same time, have enrolled their names among His people, and have sat down at His table many times, you are still counted with the world, and are depriving yourself of one of the principal means which He has provided, for the nourishing and growth of

those whom He does not choose to see always remaining mere babes in Christ.

“And now, after all you have said about your unworthiness and fear of being deceived and of deceiving others, I must say, that if you have not a hope in Christ, sufficiently strong to encourage you to perform this simple duty, you ought to give it up, and seek a better one. If you are not fit to join the church, you are not fit to live or to die.”

He replied, that I surely could not wish him to take so solemn a step, in his present state of mind; with all the doubt and misgiving which still troubled him.

To this I assented; but added: “To-morrow the church committee will be together. If you will come and meet with us, we shall be glad to see you.

“Perhaps after hearing the conversation between the committee and those whom we expect as candidates, you will be encouraged, and may be inclined to talk with us about your own feelings; but if not, you can go as

you came, and I will tell the brethren of this understanding between us."

To this arrangement he partly agreed. The next day he attended the meeting. He took his turn in relating his religious exercises. And the committee, after the candidates had retired, promptly decided in favor of his admission, in case, on reflection, he should choose to come.

The next day I called upon him; and was met with a welcoming smile. His countenance at once revealed the result of the experiment which had been ventured on. In reply to an inquiry as to his feelings, he exclaimed, with much emotion:

"I have not been so happy for two years."

Hearing others relate their different religious histories, he had unconsciously been learning the genuineness of his own experience.

Even the hearing *himself* speak, had done him good. His own experience, thus, as it were, overheard, had presented God's gra-

cious dealings with his soul, in a new and intelligible aspect, before his own mind. He now *knew* that he believed; and in whom. Duty and privilege now seemed coincident.

At the proper time, he stood up as a witness for God; a professed follower of the Saviour. His family devotions, lately enjoyed by his former pastor, after the lapse of almost a quarter of a century, furnished a beautiful illustration of the permanence and ripening of the Spirit's fruit; and suggested the wish that many other doubting though sincere disciples, having both penitence and faith, would also find COURAGE to join the church.

Another case is recollected, in which the lack of courage was on the part of a church committee, perhaps with the concurrence of the pastor.

Two young ladies presented themselves for admission; and in the course of the interview, the fact was brought out, that thirteen years before, they with two others about the

same age, of twelve or fifteen years, had been advised to wait awhile on account of their youth. The large number of young people who were entering the church about the same time, probably awakened special anxiety and led to special caution, as well as peculiar joy.

The four had waited ever since. One had but recently found shelter with another denomination. And the other three had walked in comparative darkness, not relapsing into indifference, but evidently suffering from their long exposure, outside of Christ's fold.

It is not from the youngest members, or those who are received within a comparatively short time after their hopeful conversion, that pastors and churches have the most trouble.

A young man once came to me very soon after his supposed conversion; and with the utmost modesty, and yet with a courage evidently based on conscience, spoke of the duty of owning Christ publicly.

He said he had endeavored to give himself up; and had promised to do his whole duty, as far as he should have grace to know and perform it; and he did not see why he should long delay a compliance with that one command of the Saviour.

Neither did his pastor. However he might have judged in the case of a younger or less reliable person, he gladly received Mr. E. to the communion within the first month of his Christian life, and has never been sorry.

A proper courage and promptness in joining the church, and a suitable confidence in the upholding grace of God, on the part of those who guard the doors, combined with due caution on both sides, might prevent many a needless and mischievous delay in the performance of a duty so simple, and so binding upon every true child of God.

Christ says: **THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.** What right has any disciple to refrain from doing it? If it is a *solemn* duty, not to be lightly performed, so is prayer. Neither

should, for such a reason, be neglected. A hope which is not firm enough to sustain us in taking this step, is not sufficient to die with, nor to live by. Obedience is one of the evidences of faith; one of the fruits of the Spirit.

A FALSE REFUGE FORSAKEN.

In the month of May, 1831, a young man, eighteen years of age, by the name of S., removed from a town in New Hampshire to the neighborhood of the Hillside Church, boarding for a time with his brother—an earnest Christian, now doubtless a happy dweller on Mount Zion above.

Though his parents were professors of religion, S. had never attended a social meeting, nor felt any special religious interest. He had imbibed Universalist sentiments, and was far from the paths of piety.

That brother had visited him, fresh from the inspiring influences of a revived and earnest church, and conversed faithfully with

him on religious matters. This had in some measure prepared him for the influences which surrounded him at B. On his arrival, he very soon found himself in a new religious atmosphere. He was at once invited and induced, to attend public worship and social meetings.

The prayers and exhortations to which he listened, and, not less, the exhibition of personal religion in the lives and conversation of his brother and family, forcibly impressed his mind, during the month he remained there.

Soon after changing his boarding place for another at some distance, he spent an evening at his brother's house. Most of the time was occupied, as he says, in "cavilling, excusing, and objecting, in opposition to his brother's earnest advocacy of the faith of the Gospel, and the importance of a personal interest therein."

As he was leaving the house at a late hour, his brother took his hand, and with affection-

ate emotion and many tears, said repeatedly, "May God have mercy on your soul!" with other expressions of great earnestness.

He left in tears and with deep feeling. His refuges of lies had all vanished; and he felt the need of some new shelter for his soul. These feelings continued without much change for some time. A Bible class and other meetings were attended; but no decisive step was taken, and no real progress made.

After a few weeks, his previous impressions passed away. The vanities of the world assumed new charms; sin appeared again inviting. He soon turned with hope to his old delusion, and listened favorably to Satan's doctrine: "Thou shalt not surely die." He even became an advocate of error, and a reviler of the truth. He made light of his former impressions; and resembled, as he himself said, the fearful and revolting picture drawn in II. Peter, 2:22.

He was present, for one day, at the pro-

tracted meeting, described on the preceding pages. Although the preaching, he says, was faithful and pungent, yet, as is generally the case under like circumstances, he succeeded in his fixed determination, "not to be moved." When the heart is determined that it "will not come unto Christ" and have life, the purpose is generally for the time successful.

A month later, however, God's quiver furnished one arrow, that had its commission to reach and pierce his heart. He heard a sermon on the unpardonable sin, which of all others, had the effect to convince and alarm him. And though he did not immediately yield to these renewed calls of that Spirit, who, as he feared, had forever been grieved away from his heart, yet his impressions became deeper. He sought retirement, and read the Bible, and Baxter's Call; and "used various means to acquire more pungent feeling."

On the 28th of October, he, with his

earnest and affectionate brother, called on the pastor. It was a memorable interview. I had known but little of his particular feelings ; though, in the ways already mentioned, he had shown, at different times, an interest in divine things.

But now he came, with all the strong elements of his mental and moral nature stirred to their utmost depths. Said he, in the most earnest, yet calm and deliberate manner : " I am like a man whose ship has suddenly sprung a leak, and is sunk in the middle of the ocean, leaving him without a boat or even a plank in sight. Can you direct me ? "

Never did a young minister more need, or more desire, divine direction, in pointing this sinking, almost despairing soul, at the very crisis of its destiny, to the ark of safety, and to the blessed Pilot, waiting to receive and shelter the lost.

After conversation and prayer, S. retired to his room. He was requested to read some passages in Isaiah, chapter 1st, and John,

chapter 3d; the tract entitled "To-day," and the hymn, "Come, humble sinner." He was also earnestly entreated not to leave his chamber until he had submitted heartily to Christ.

What followed shall be related in his own words.

"I knelt down before God, and tried, according to the best of my knowledge, to consecrate myself to Him. This done, I felt that I had come to the end of the rope.

"As I had shut the door of my room with the resolution that I would not go out impenitent, I felt somewhat in despair, and dared not get up from my knees. A suggestion of suicide was presented to my mind; but the words of St. Paul instantly occurred to me: 'Do thyself no harm!'

"I have often thought that my yielding to the suggestion contained in this text, was perhaps my first act of obedience to God.

"My brother soon came in. He assisted

me to rise, and conversed somewhat on the Christian hope.

“I left the room with a trembling hope that I had found pardon for my sins; and in a few days was rejoicing in forgiveness, and laboring, I trust, in the service of Christ.”

This, with a good measure of courage and perseverance, and not without success, Mr. S., as well as others whom he speaks of as fellow converts, have continued to do, in another place, ever since. Thus we must believe, notwithstanding the manner in which he commences the closing paragraph in the letter, from which, with the aid of the pastor's memory, the preceding account has been compiled.

“I have accomplished comparatively nothing in my Master's service. But I feel humbly confident of the work of God, as manifested to me in those days. In reviewing those scenes, what thoughts rush upon the mind! Many who heard the Gospel from your lips are now rejoicing above; while others may

be saying, 'the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.'"

Few cases of conversion, among the many which memory has recorded, and whose results are still visible in happy and useful Christian lives, are more fitted to strengthen our faith in God, and our hopes for men, even the chief of sinners, than that of this now Christian brother.

He is no longer without a boat or a plank, ready to sink in a dark ocean of uncertainty and despair. Safe in the ark, he is floating, not always over unruffled waters, but without fear, under the guidance of the great Pilot, towards a haven of rest.

Blessed indeed are the results, though painful the process, of being driven to forsake a false refuge.

Reader! have you not sometimes feared that your refuge is such an one? I take it for granted that you have a refuge. Is there not some hope, some real or imagined possibility, to which your soul flees, when disturbed with

anticipations of dying, and of what follows death?

Is yours the same shelter under which this man once tried to hide? He found it too narrow. It left him exposed to God's righteous displeasure, as set forth in his holy word.

Oh, forsake it; or whatever other unscriptural refuge you have trusted to, and flee to the Cross, under whose shadow this man found comfort and safety. Yet there is room.

23*

THE HILLSIDE REVISITED.

Amidst much love of change, there is, in all hearts, a certain attachment to what is fixed. We would not have everything in motion, like a rolling stone, or like the rolling ocean, from whose state of unrest, begetting restlessness in us, we gladly step upon *terra firma*, and are once more quiet.

The permanence of JEHOVAH, living on amidst all human decay and death, is like a ROCK, for the dizzy mind to land upon.

“Thou art the ever living God,
Were all the nation's dead.”

The WORD of the Lord, like himself, enduring forever, is an eternal beacon, pouring

forth its blessed rays, alike through the clearest moonlight of human reason at its best estate, and amidst the alternating storms of passion, and mists of error, in the moral atmosphere.

Yes, the Word of the Lord liveth and abideth forever. Whatever neglect it may suffer, or false interpretation; whatever resistance may be made to the application of its great principles of truth and justice and liberty and peace, of public and private morality, still it STANDS. In keeping its commandments there is great reward. The way of transgressors against it will ever be hard. The final judgment based upon it, will be at once a proof and a counterpart of its permanence.

But not only God and his Word are thus enduring. The FRUITS of the Word, as read and preached, received into the heart, and made, by the Spirit, the germinant seed of a perpetual harvest, are equally indestructible. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life."

And of all faithful labor put forth by Christ's disciples, of whatever age, sex, or condition, we may understand an apostle to say, that it has its fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

A Christian minister revisits the scene of early pastoral labor. He had not wrought alone in that vineyard. Others, both men and women, had labored with him in the gospel. Other ministers had preceded and followed him in the same field.

It is a field strangely, and in some respects, sadly, changed. The harp of Providence has many minor notes. Its strings, touched by unseen hands, vibrate with melancholy music. Yet there is harmony, sweet though plaintive. For it is *divine* Providence, working out the counsels of divine grace.

And so, with all the sad changes, there is the bright element of permanence here.

Let us see. A quarter of a century before, twelve men had undertaken to build a sanctuary, where the doctrines of the Apostles and

of the Reformation should be proclaimed. It was done. And thousands of eyes saw, every bright morning, glittering upon the Hillside, the spire of a graceful edifice, whose Sabbath bell rung out its weekly summons, seeming to say, in the words cast upon its circumference,

“I to the church the living call.”

They came. By hundreds, and in all, by thousands, the people ventured to hear these setters forth of strange doctrines. They unconsciously imbibed the same truths on which their godly ancestors had lived. The faith in which their fathers died, they joyfully embraced.

The seed of truth thus falling upon a fallow ground, soon sprung up. The harvest ripened; and the seed was again scattered, and reproduced. Then, as before recorded on these pages, special services attracted multitudes, for days in succession,

to the house of God; and the adjoining groves were vocal with prayer and praise.

Many were added to that church, and more to others, of such, it was hoped, as should be saved. The little flock of worshippers was soon reckoned by hundreds. And then came darker days; yet not without light. For when outward props were removed, and former munificence no longer remained, to bear all necessary burdens, the number of worshippers, resident in the four quarters of the wide circle of which this hill of our Zion had been the centre, had so increased, that the process of church extension by colonizing was commenced.

- Those new centres, occupied by various branches of the Church of Christ, were soon multiplied, leaving it a matter unimportant, except on the score of a regretful though thankful reminiscence, that the original hive, whence, directly or indirectly, those swarms have issued, is now deserted, and beginning

to crumble in the slowly decaying processes of a young antiquity.

This is indeed a change not pleasing to the eye; and more painful to the feelings, at least of those, who like the elder Jews, calling to mind the glories of the first temple, remember the beauty of this House in the freshness of its adornings, and the care of its early keeping.

But there is something remaining besides "dust and ruins." Even if the progress of material decay and desolation should not, as we fondly hope, be arrested, still there are fruits that will outlast the sun. The grave itself cannot bury them; for among the sleeping tenants of the neighboring, or more distant, cemeteries, are many who once sat within those walls, and heard words to the saving of their souls.

But it is of the living that we speak; and of fruits that are visible as well as permanent. Let us look again at the Hillside, and its neighborhood.

From other scenes the former pastor comes, to spend a few autumnal days among the remnant of the Hillside flock. He finds himself at nightfall under a hospitable roof, near the centre of the wide field of his juvenile labors. Forest fragrance, and the beauty of river and plain, and the evening song of unconscious praise "from bush and grove," fill every sense.

But the heart is yet more full. For in that house twenty souls had been hopefully born again, within a former period of five years. And other houses are visited. Change there is, indeed. Change in the visitor and in the host. The family history given and heard are records of change.

But the fruit remains. The peaceful deaths of some, the growing usefulness of others who are absent, as recounted at different firesides, give a different, but a real, pleasure both to the relators and the listener. And then there are the present, living, speaking evidences of the permanence of the fruits of

the Spirit. Those family devotions are led in turn by men, who twenty-five years before, learned to pray. Those matrons rehearse, with glistening eyes, to the pastor of their youth, the history of their conversion; while their children listen respectfully, as their parents did a quarter of a century before, to personal inquiries and appeals concerning their duty and their safety.

And when a little company are gathered in an upper chamber, for the purpose of Christian conference, and the interchange of recollections, how forcible is the demonstration of the unity of the Spirit! How strong, yet gentle, is the bond of peace, that binds together these hearts, though for long years without mutual communication.

These two thoughts, then; a thought of change, and a thought of permanence, are uppermost in the reflections following such a revisiting.

A thought of change. What could more inevitably suggest it? Of many, it must be

said and heard: the places that knew them know them no more. Yes, even the living are changed; and the difficulty of mutual recognition reminds us that even while on earth, the *persons* who knew us, know us no more.

And then ancient towns have been divided. New cities are springing up. The wonders of modern art and science have come, changing everything. The cottages of the poor have crumbled. The mansions of the wealthy have new tenants. Fair gardens are divided by huge embankments, and traversed by ponderous trains.

Even the churches of the living God are not permanent. Now branching forth, and as it were, crystallizing into new and beautiful organizations; and then vanishing in one place to reappear in another, like the meteors of the north.

In short, among the voices of each night and each day, passed amidst such reminiscences, may be heard, as the sum and substance

of the whole: "our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." No person, no thing, is the same. "All things are full of change."

But there is another thought. It is of PERMANENCE. The thought, not only that God is unchangeable, and that the WORD of the Lord endureth forever; and that the GOSPEL lives and spreads; and that TRUTH, instead of being reduced, as once there, almost to the point of invisibility, is stronger than error on error's old ground, where it was strong and boasting, and intolerant. But also, that what men had heard, long ago and believed and obeyed, *remained in them*. They had *continued* in the Son and in the Father.

Then other precious thoughts are suggested; thoughts of the promise annexed to those words of the apostle, the grand consummation and climax of permanence, even ETERNAL LIFE.

The CHURCH of Christ, also, lives. Individual churches, though this one is virtually dis-

banded, survive and flourish. All those formerly associated as sister churches, with the little flock at the Hillside, have gained in numbers and in strength. From being feeble bands of exiles, many of them dispossessed of their fathers' sanctuaries and other property, under the unjust operation of laws, as then administered, they have gathered around them the largest congregations in most of the respective towns.

Their pastors are all changed, and many of them gone to their rest. But others, and faithful men, are laboring in the harvest. The succession fails not. Not only does the Word of God live and abide forever, but the dispensation of the Word is not neglected.

Though the Hillside Church is no longer in active existence, may these, its associates and successors, still live and flourish. And may all the dwellers on those hills and in those valleys, be guided in paths of truth and duty, to that better land, where flows the river of life, more beautiful than the streams which wind around their pleasant homes.



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